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Israel tanks on the Gaza border. In background the Gazan town of Rafah. *For more coverage see pages 5, 8, 9, 27, 28.*

[Eliyahu Ben Yigal/Jinipix/Israel Sun photo]

'All-out war' against Hamas: Barak

By SHAHAR ILAN
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Facing catcalls from Arab lawmakers, Defence Minister Ehud Barak told a stormy Knesset session on Dec. 29 that the operation in Gaza will be "widened and deepened as is necessary.

"We have an 'all-out war' against Hamas and its kind," Barak said, using a term he has employed in the past to describe the long-term struggle against Israel's Islamist enemies.

Barak's address came as the Israel Defence Forces continued a third day of air assaults on the Gaza Strip, killing more than 300 Palestinians in the deadliest violence in the territory in decades.

He recalled that U.S. president-elect Barack Obama, who visited Sderot during his election campaign last year, said that "if rockets were being fired at his home while his two daughters were sleeping, he would do everything he could to prevent it."

The defence minister said that Israel is engaged in a "war to the bitter end" against Hamas in Gaza.

Barak added that the massive air assault Israel launched on Dec. 27 is aimed not at Gaza's residents but at the territory's Hamas rulers. He said the operation's goal is to force Hamas to stop its hostile actions directed at Israeli civilians.

Continued on page 28

Economic downturn causing 'anxiety, concern'

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Heads of Jewish organizations are saying that it's still too early to know how they will be affected by Canada's economic downturn in the last few months of 2008.

However, community leaders say they are learning of more and more individuals who are being affected by the economy, and they are preparing for the fallout.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, senior rabbi of Beth Tzedec Congregation, has noted "a lot of anxiety and concern," particularly among retirees and those nearing retirement.

As well, he said, "a number of young people have lost their jobs."

The synagogue's executive director, Sheldon Maerov, noted that the downturn "really hit" in October after most people had renewed their annual memberships, and any income loss affecting their ability to pay is not necessarily apparent yet.

Fundraising is also an area that will pose increasing challenges, Maerov expects. He anticipates that donors to all causes may spread large gifts over a longer time span or reduce the amounts of their pledges.

However, he added, there may also be donors who come forward for the first time, because they realize the necessity of doing so.

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Madoff scandal reaches into Canada – please see page 29

The News in Brief

CANADA

PM Lights Menorah

CALGARY — Prime Minister Stephen Harper took part in a menorah-lighting ceremony at Calgary city hall on Dec. 22 as part of Chabad Lubavitch of Alberta's 20th anniversary celebrations. The PM used the opportunity to herald the Conservative party's support for Israel and its dedication to fighting anti-Semitism. "Under my government, our country will remain a resolute defender of the Jewish faith, of Jewish religious freedom and our country will remain a staunch ally of the State of Israel," he told the crowd and Canadian Press.

Eilat Emerg

TORONTO — UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, in cooperation with United Israel Appeal of Canada, is contributing $1 million toward a $4-million renovation of Eilat's Yoseftal Hospital. The project includes a new emergency room for the hospital, which is the sole provider of medical services to the 55,000 residents of Eilat and 11 surrounding communities, as well as visitors to the area. Clalit Health Services contributed $2 million to the project and the Israeli government added another $1 million.

WORLD

iPhone Siddur

NEW YORK — A new digital prayer book has been made available for Apple's popular iPhone. The siddur, created by the Internet company RustyBrick, offers prayer texts in several versions, as well as a feature to determine appropriate prayer times based on location. A built-in data base helps users locate the nearest minyan. It can be downloaded through the iTunes application.

Rare Rimonim

SYDNEY, Australia — A pair of rare silver Torah crowns have been purchased by an unnamed U.S. buyer, amid a dispute in Australia over the sale of valuable Judaica. The rimonim, which date back to 1719 and which Sothebys described in its catalogue as "exceptionally rare," were sold by the auction house in New York for $338,500 (US). The items were found by accident in a store room of the Great Synagogue in Sydney. Norman Seligman, CEO of the Sydney Jewish Museum, said that it was "a pity that something that has some significance to the Australian Jewish community is sold and leaves the country."

Citizen of Paris

PARIS — Captive Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit was recently named an honorary citizen of Paris. The title was bestowed on Schalit, a French-Israeli dual citizen, in a unanimous vote of Paris city council. The French town of Raincy also named Schalit an honorary citizen in November, while the Grenoble City Hall hung his photo in their building facade in December. Schalit has been held by Hamas in Gaza since 2006.

Citizen of Rome?

ROME — Rome's mayor favours granting honorary citizenship to the eternal city to captured Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit. During a public menorah-lighting ceremony, Mayor Gianni Alemanno said the proposal, put forward by Rome's Jewish community, seemed like "an excellent idea." Alemanno added that he wanted to extend the honour "to give a sign of solidarity to the Jewish community."

Madoff Fallout

ATHENS — Avriani, a leading Greek newspaper, called Bernard Madoff's Ponzi scheme "the Jewish Connection." Under a front page headline, the weekly devoted five pages of its Dec. 21 edition to the Madoff scandal, emphasizing at least six times that Madoff is Jewish and implying that Jews are behind the world's financial problems.

Bnei Menashe Get Chanukah Books

JERUSALEM — A book about Chanukah laws and customs has been distributed to the Bnei Menashe of northeastern India in their native languages of Mizo and Kuki.

The Bnei Menashe, who were exiled from Israel some 500 years before the historical events commemorated in Chanukah and who reside primarily in the Indian states of Mizoram and Manipur, were unaware of the holiday until the modern era.

The Bnei Menashe claim descent from one of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, which were sent into exile by the Assyrian Empire more than 27 centuries ago.

Shavei Israel, a non-profit organization designed to strengthen ties between Israel and the descendants of Jews around the world, printed and distributed the book.

"The Bnei Menashe are anxiously awaiting the passage of a decision by Israel's cabinet to allow them all to come to Israel," said Michael Freund, Shavei Israel's chair and founder.

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People with mental health issues need more resources

Part 1 of this three-part series, which appeared in the Dec. 18 issue of CJN, examined the stigma associated with people who suffer from mental illness and the lack of attention given to this problem in the Toronto Jewish community.

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Special Report
Part 2 of 3

There aren't enough homes or services available for the mentally ill in the Jewish community, compared to the number of people who need help, said "John," who has a brother with schizophrenia.

"I don't think anyone even has an idea of the number of mentally ill in the community because it is just not a priority," he said.

Rochelle Goldman-Brown is the executive director of Chai Tikvah Foundation, a Jewish support service that provides housing for psychiatrically disabled adults, as well as support services for people living on their own.

"We've been around for 25 years. We have a group home, a triplex, and we run a social recreational program once a week out of the National Council of Jewish Women," Goldman-Brown said.

"But we're basically a band-aid for the need of the community."

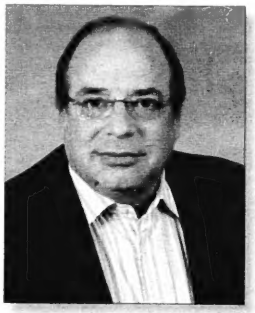
She explained that the group home located in Thornhill, Ont., has eight residents who receive 24-hour support.

Last year, the foundation purchased a triplex, which has space to house eight more residents who receive support from a staff of about 15 social workers who make frequent visits to the home.

Chai Tikvah, which works to have its residents eventually move into more independent living, has also been allotted 15 apartments in a new complex being built at the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan, which will provide housing for 18 adults who require less supervision.

The weekly social recreation program for residents and others in the community is called Club Simcha. Funded by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the program attracts 20 to 25 people each week.

But John, whose Holocaust survivor parents have been taking care of his schizophrenic adult brother for his entire life, spoke to The CJN on the condition of anonymity about the lack of services for the Jewish community.


Richard Cummings

"If we look at the numbers of the people who are mentally ill – and that is a broad term that can include people who are depressed – the numbers are just totally out of whack. There aren't only 12 mentally ill people in the Toronto Jewish community that need services," he said, referring to the small number of people Chai Tikvah is able to support.

"So, either they are living on the streets or are abandoned, living in shelters; or parents like mine are suffering and dealing with the consequences," John said, adding that his family is considering Toronto's Baycrest Centre to provide his brother with long-term care, but the waiting list is years long.

As a result of the lack of space in Jewish housing, Goldman-Brown said that many Jews are living in non-Jewish group homes.

"We get a lot of calls from those people saying, 'They have crosses here,' or 'They don't have kosher food,' and it's a struggle," she said.

Continued on page 6

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From the editor's desk...

In November, as reported in The CJN and in other media, Rabbi Gunther Plaut donated his extensive personal library of more than 4,000 books to the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections at York University in Toronto.

Accompanying the story of the very generous donation that appeared in this paper was a photo of Rabbi Plaut, smiling, his tie a bit askew, seated between his two children, Judith Plaut and Rabbi Jonathan Plaut, who were standing on either side of him.

Evident in the photo are signs of the Alzheimer's that struck Rabbi Plaut some five years ago. The formerly clear-eyed, sculpted, vigorous features of his face have ceded to the softer visage and the cloudy, somewhat opaque expression that we see on the victims of the disease.

The feeling of melancholy that accompanied the sight of the physical decline of one of Canadian Jewry's acknowledged giants was undeniable, though fleeting. But the occasion was a momentous one for the Plaut family and especially for the wider Canadian public that will be served by the scholarship that will ultimately flow from the housing of the Plaut library at York University.

The sheer scope of the library makes it a very significant addition to the world of higher learning and independent study. Not surprisingly given the vast, eclectic knowledge of the man, the books in the rabbi's collection range across a broad spectrum of works on religion, science, ethics, politics and history, as well as art, popular fiction and cartoons.

Sara Horowitz, director of York's Centre for Jewish Studies and a monthly columnist with The CJN, said of the library that "among other things, it includes rare books of Judaica, books of biblical commentary on Halachah, books by really important Jewish thinkers that are, the books themselves, several centuries old, and they are quite rare. These are books that you would very infrequently encounter," Horowitz said.

She also pointed out that the significance of the acquisition was additionally enhanced because York's Centre for Jewish Studies now will retain the copyright arising from the further publication of Rabbi Plaut's works.

"It means we can develop Jewish intellectual projects that might have Rabbi Plaut's writing at the centre. In the future, we might decide to take a particular essay or a sermon of his, or something he published on any given issue that might have wide-reaching implications, and we could use his essay as a jumping-off point," Horowitz said.

The profundity and breadth of Rabbi Plaut's writing could not be better illustrated than in the publication last year of Eight Decades, The Selected Writings of W. Gunther Plaut (Dundern Press).

Apart from one essay, the selections in the book were actually made by Rabbi Plaut himself more than 15 years ago. The folio containing the essays was discovered by the rabbi's son, Jonathan, while he sorted through his father's voluminous papers. When decisions were made about publishing the collection, Rabbi Jonathan Plaut added one essay to those selected by his father.

True to the characteristic for which Rabbi Plaut was known, the sweep of subject matter in this collection is very impressive. The essays deal with studies of history, biblical inquiries, literature and linguistics, theological questions, moral and social issues, Israel, Reform Jewish perspectives, the German-Jewish experience and legal issues. They will delight the earnest and curious reader.

As Rabbi Jonathan Plaut notes in his introduction to the book, it is intended as a companion to One Voice: The Selected Sermons of W. Gunther Plaut, (Dundern Press), which was published in 2007.

In the photo that appeared with the news story of the library donation to York University, Rabbi Plaut's children stand beside their infirm father, obviously proud and very much respectful of him.

Jonathan Plaut's right hand rests tenderly and undoubtedly, firmly as well, on his father's shoulder.

The photo is a moving portrait of filial love that is at once beautiful and inspiring. It is a gentle, powerful image that visibly reinforces the values that guide this family and that have guided the Jewish people for thousands of years: *"Al tashlichenu l'eyt ziknah; Kichlot cochainu al ta'azvenu"* (Please do not cast us aside in our old age. When our strength abates, please do not abandon us.) These prayers appear in the Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur liturgy.

With the concluding paragraph of his introduction, Rabbi Jonathan Plaut provides a further glimpse into the touching realm of the marked filial love that has very obviously characterized his and his sister's relation to their father.

"Until my father developed Alzheimer's disease five years ago, he spent each day writing his regular newspaper columns and magazine articles, or working on his current book. This anthology is the final publication from his pen – may its publication keep alive the spirit of this great man!"

– MBD

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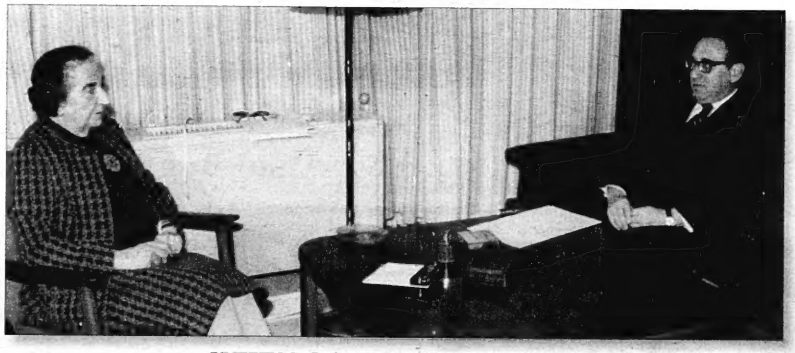

WHEN GOLDA MET HENRY

In January 1974, U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger launched what came to be known as shuttle diplomacy. His goal was to end hostilities between Israel and Egypt, and between Israel and Syria after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Kissinger was successful. Eventually, Israel signed separation of forces agreements with both Egypt and Syria. In 1979, Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty, but to this day, Israel and Syria remain technically at war. In this photo, Kissinger meets with Israeli prime minister Golda Meir, who resigned some months later.

Israeli offensive touches off protests in Canada

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF and SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporters

Protests and counter-protests took place in cities across Canada last weekend in reaction to Israel's attack on Gaza.

In the wake of the Israel Defence Forces' large-scale, weekened bombing campaign against Hamas forces, compounds and smuggling tunnels – in response to days of continuous rocket fire from Gaza after a ceasefire truce expired Dec. 19 – pro-Palestinian demonstrators in Canada staged marches on Sunday in Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal and other cities, denouncing Israel's operation.

Amir Gissin

In Toronto, hundreds of demonstrators turned out in front of the Israeli Embassy. Also present were several members of the Jewish Defence League.

Meir Weinstein, national director of the Jewish Defence League of Canada, said he managed to get about 40 people together in Toronto for Sunday's demonstration, after learning Saturday night that organizations including the Canadian Arab Federation, Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid, and Palestine House planned to protest outside the Israeli consulate.

"I found out about this Saturday night and did whatever I could to get some people together.

Weinstein said about 300 people gathered to protest against Israel's attack on Gaza. He said Sid Ryan, president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario, was among them.

A Dec. 29 report in the Toronto Star quoted Ryan as saying at the Toronto protest: "I want to condemn, in the strongest terms, the acts of genocide committed by Israel this weekend."

Moshe Ronen

Weinstein said: "We heard some people saying in Arabic, 'Slaughter the Jews.' That was not said by the organizers, but it was said by quite a few of the protesters.

"We want to make sure that whenever there is going to be an anti-Israel protest, we're going to be there to counter it, to make sure that the reporting is going to be balanced and make sure that there are people from Canada's Jewish community that will stand up for the Israeli army and what they're doing."

Weinstein said he also heard pro-Palestinian organizers telling their supporters that what Israel was doing is "a genocide, and calling Israel an apartheid state. They don't believe there should be an Israel."

He said there were shouting matches between the two sides, but no violence.

"Israel is involved in a just war against Hamas, and it's about time," he said.

Every country has the right and obligation to protect its citizens, says Ronen

In Montreal, dozens of protesters marched down Ste-Catherine Street, some bearing banners reading "Save Gaza," "Free Palestine" and "Break the Siege," among others, according to a Dec. 29, report from the Montreal Gazette.

And in Ottawa, dozens of pro-Palestinian demonstrators gathered outside City Hall, calling for an end to the attack.

In a statement on Saturday, Minister of Foreign Affairs Lawrence Cannon pleaded for calm in the region, urging both sides to negotiate a renewed ceasefire and strive for peace.

"Canada is deeply concerned by the escalation of violence in southern Israel and the Gaza Strip and by the loss of life and the suffering sustained by all sides," he said.

He added, however, that "Israel has a clear right to defend itself against the continued rocket attacks by Palestinian militant groups which have deliberately targeted civilians. First and foremost, those rocket attacks must stop. At the same time, we urge both sides to use all efforts to avoid civilian casualties and to create the conditions to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need in Gaza."

In a statement from Israel, Moshe Ronen, chair of the Canada-Israel Committee, thanked Cannon for his comments on behalf of the Canadian Jewish community.

"Every country has the right and obligation to protect its citizens. Israel is doing no less than Canada would, could and should do under similar circumstances," Ronen said.

"Hamas has made victims of both Israelis and Palestinians," he added. "Every casualty rests with Hamas – whether in Sderot, Kiryat Gat or Gaza City. Until it abandons its murderous dogma, no one will be safe, and no peace, which we seek, is within reach."

In another statement, B'nai Brith Canada said Israel has "a duty" to defend its citizens.

Frank Dimant, B'nai Brith's executive vice-president, called the loss of life "tragic" while urging the world to "recognize that the Gaza Strip... is nothing more than a breeding ground for terrorists that seek to destroy the Jewish State."

Miriam Ziv, Israel's ambassador to Canada, was en route back here from Israel on Monday and could not be reached for comment, according to an Israeli Embassy spokesperson.

In response to the weekend protests, Israeli consul general in Toronto, Amir Gissin, told The CJN he appreciated much of the Canadian media's "truthful" coverage of the IDF's offensive, saying Israel had been rightly portrayed as taking action only after "a very long time of terror and harassment toward Israeli towns and communities."

He was disappointed, however, in "exaggerations" of the number of protesters some media outlets reported on the demonstration in Toronto, saying he observed what looked like 200 pro-Palestinian demonstrators outside his office and not 800, as reported by the Canadian Press.

Gissin said he felt that most Canadians did not identify with calls to blame Israel for the weekend's violence.

"Because everybody knows [Hamas] is on the other side and what kind of instability and terror they want to create," he said. "I think the true picture should be conveyed. Not too many people [in Canada] support that. On the contrary, I think most people understand that sometimes you have to fight in order to defend your cities."

Lawrence Cannon

Gissin said that while he could not predict what would happen next in Gaza, one thing is certain: "We will do our utmost to change realities on the ground and bring peace and quiet to the South of Israel. And we hope along the way, a new coalition will be created to let the moderate powers prevail and continue negotiation towards peace."

On Sunday, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said Hamas could have prevented Israel's attack on the Gaza Strip, calling on Hamas to renew its cease-fire with Israel.

"We spoke to them and told them, 'Please, we ask you not to end the cease-fire. Let it continue,'" Abbas said during a news conference with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit. "We want to protect the Gaza Strip. We don't want it to be destroyed."

Abbas also called the continuing rocket attacks on Israel "acts of foolishness."

Palestinian Authority officials in Ramallah said Saturday that Abbas' Fatah party, which rules the West Bank, was prepared to assume control of Gaza if Israel topples the Hamas regime there.

With files from JTA.

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Family Caregiver Connections Project launched

Not many group home options available for mentally ill Jews

Continued from page 3

"With the number of calls we get and the number we are able to actually address, it's really quite sad."

Goldman-Brown added that Chai Tikvah does not promote its services because there are only so many beds and it's not able to fully address the needs of the community.

"Number 1, they have to fit our criteria to get in, and number 2, the waiting list is usually a few years," she said.

"Rachel," who has a son who suffers from schizophrenia who currently lives at Chai Tikvah, said she learned about the home by chance – before she even knew her son would need it – when a friend came to visit her when she was sitting shivah for her late husband. The friend suggested that she donate all her excess food from the shivah to Chai Tikvah.

After her son spent months in and out of hospitals and she was faced with the option of sending her son to live in non-Jewish group homes in small Ontario towns such as Woodstock and Lindsay, she suddenly remembered hearing about Chai Tikvah.

She managed to get her son into the home after one of the residents moved out to live more independently.

"But what about all the others who are waiting to get into a home?" she asked.

"Heavens knows I've talked to so many people, and as soon as I start talking about it, they start telling me about a family member."

Rachel said it was important for her son to live at Chai Tikvah because "he had a strong Jewish upbringing, and I wanted him close to the family. He has no one else. He's single, he never married. He's got his aunts and uncles here, his brother, his mother. What was he going to do in Woodstock or Lindsay?"

Although Rachel is encouraged by the allotment of 15 apartments in the Lebovic centre, she said Chai Tikvah is being asked to raise $250,000 for administrative fees, which she thinks will be difficult.

Despite the fact that there aren't many group home options for mentally ill Jews, there are programs available for those who suffer from mental illness, and their caregivers.

Devora Schwartz-Waxman, the Family Caregiver Connections co-ordinator at the Circle of Care, a non-profit provider of in-home health and support services, spoke to The CJN about a new initiative to help people who are caring for aging or ailing family members.

Seven agencies, Circle of Care, Baycrest, Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living, Chai Tikvah Foundation, Jewish Family & Child, Jewish Immigrant Aid Services Toronto and Reena, have joined forces to create the Family Caregiver Connections Project.

Schwartz-Waxman said one aspect of the project is to help elderly parents who care for adult children to prepare for a time when they are no longer able to do so.

"We work with caregivers who have children who have mental health issues and help them prepare for [the problems that come with] aging. The other end is people who are caring for seniors who have mental health issues," she said.

"There is a lot of planning if the parents have kept their kids at home all along, and now the mother who has looked after the child all along has dementia and the child is in their 60s and is starting to have age-related health issues – it becomes a very complicated situation."

She said the project provides assistance to aging caregivers by encouraging them to take time out for themselves without feeling guilty, and helping them with financial planning.

Jack Kugelmass, a social worker who has experience in the Jewish community, said that UJA Federation also has a task force on inclusion, which operates out of the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre.

Jack Kugelmass

"Federation has an inclusion initiative in an effort to include diverse groups who otherwise are disenfranchised and may not feel included. I'm talking about people with developmental needs and physical handicaps," Kugelmass said.

Jewish Family and Child (JF&C) executive director Richard Cummings and JF&C supervisor and social worker Fay Geitzhals spoke about programs their organization provides to people who suffer from any number of challenges.

The Toronto Jewish Healing Project, which operates in JF&C's chaplaincy service, tries to help people cope with illness and despair and to further a sense of well-being, comfort and guidance through the support of the Jewish community.

But Cummings said that while the project isn't exclusive to helping those coping with mental illness, there are other services, such as individual counselling for the mentally ill.

"We have programs ranging from individual counselling to a wonderful service we provide called the Bagel Club, which is a once weekly social opportunity for a wide range of adults ranging from 20 to 70 who come in and break bread together," Cummings said. "It really is a life line for people who are terribly socially isolated, marginalized and stigmatized."

Geitzhals said that the 20 to 25 people who come to the Bagel Club each week are not so different from others.

"They just have another issue to deal with in life. It would make a big difference if people were to know what it's like," she said.

"At the end of the day, if we're a community that can be more inclusive, if we're a community that can be more compassionate, you make more room for people and they fit in better," Cummings said.

"We wish we could do more," Geitzhals said.

Part 3 of this series will examine the ways in which the Jewish community can work to improve the resources available for the mentally ill and their families.

For information, call Schwartz-Waxman at 416-635-2900, ext. 413; Goldman-Brown at 905-886-6520; or Cummings at 416-638-7800.

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"His work is honorable and glorious; and his righteousness endures for ever!" (Psalms 111:3)

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ARON FRANKEL ז"ל

We extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathy to his wife Miriam, children Mark and Judy, Ralph and Gitti, Esty and Joseph, grandchildren, great grandchildren and extended family members.

Aron worked relentlessly on behalf of our schools, broader community and Klal Yisrael.

He was unique and precious to all who had the honour and privilege to know him. He is greatly missed.

Naftali Winter, President
Rabbi Shlomo Gemara, Rosh HaYeshiva
Jerry S. Solomon, Executive Director

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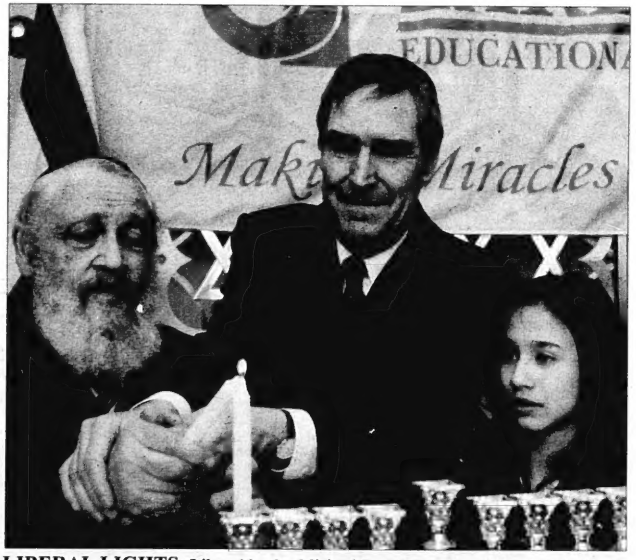


LIBERAL LIGHTS: Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff, centre, joins Rabbi Simcha Zirkind, left, and Zareinu Educational Centre student Efrat Avraham, right, as they light the menorah marking the first of eight days of Chanukah. For more Chanukah photos from around the Greater Toronto Area, visit www.cjnews.com.

Survivors' stories on menu at Yad Vashem dinner

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Though the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem bills the event as a Dinner of Miracles, it is much more than an excuse for a meal, said Avner Shalev, chair of Yad Vashem's directorate in Jerusalem. It is "a meeting, an affair, an encounter," he noted.

It is also "a dialogue between generations," said Yaron Ashkenazi, executive director of the organization's Canadian arm.

This year, some 550 people gathered at the Sephardic Kehila Centre in Thornhill for the fourth annual dinner. The event brought together 150 Holocaust survivors, 300 young adults and others in a unique format in which the aging victims of the Shoah were able to relate in detail the stories of their lives. Each dinner table featured two or three survivors and seven or eight young people, most of them Jewish – about 50 not – in an informal atmosphere.

Avner Shalev
[Paul Lungen photo]

The young professionals, who ranged in age from 20 to 40, were eager to hear their grandparents' generation describe their wartime experiences. The 50 non-Jewish participants were invited by the local affiliate of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem. Yad Vashem maintains close ties with the Christian organization, which supports the museum's mission and raises funds for its works, Shalev said.

The Dinner of Miracles was co-sponsored by the Azrieli Foundation, which also supports Yad Vashem's efforts to publish the memoirs of Holocaust survivors.

The dinner was held shortly before Chanukah, and in keeping with the holiday season, Shalev brought with him an artifact from the Yad Vashem collection, a small brass chanukiyah.

The chanukiyah belonged to a young Dutch Jew, Willy Tal, given to him as a bar mitzvah present from his father, Felix. When the war started, Felix rented a small room in Amsterdam, where he hid the family's valuables, including the chanukiyah. Around the same time, Willie, then 17, went to work as a male nurse in a Jewish hospital for the mentally ill. After more than a year at work, Willy was told of a planned Nazi "*aktion*," which would see the patients and staff deported. Willy refused to leave his patients and was caught in the Nazi roundup. In January 1943, they were transported en masse to Auschwitz. Most of the patients were killed immediately, and Willie was gassed in April of that year.

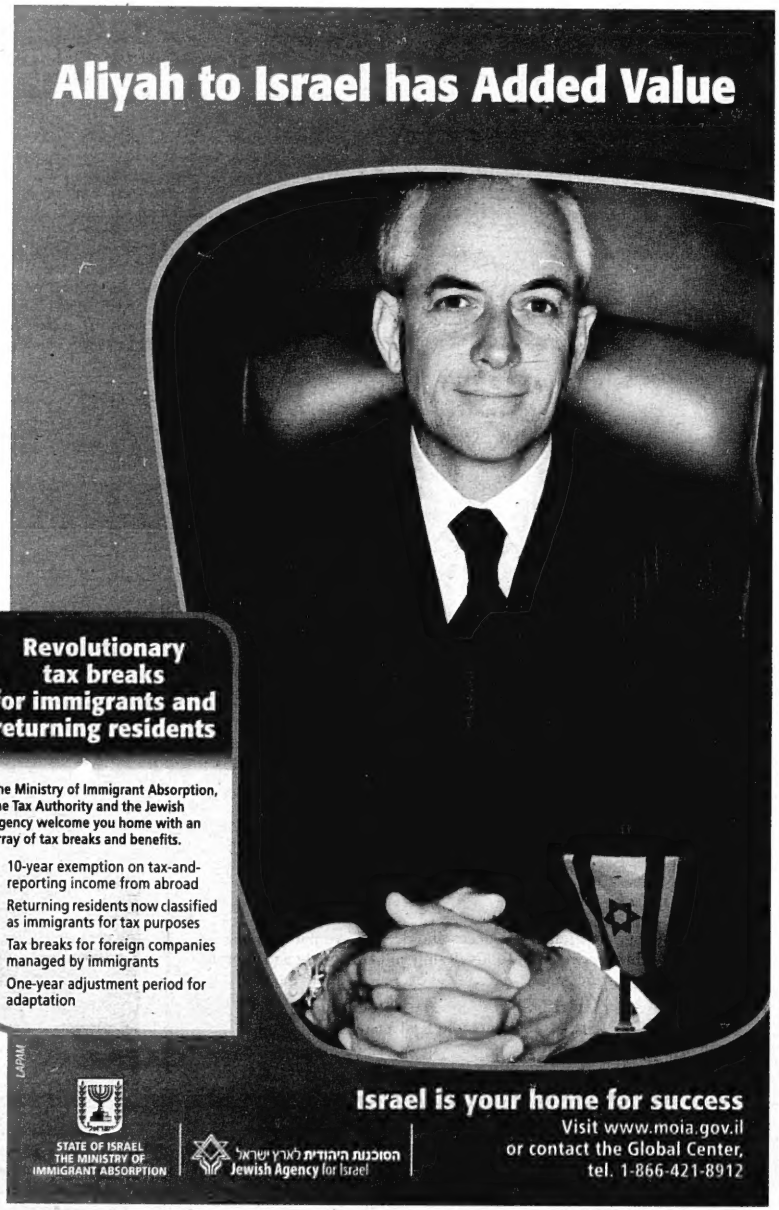
The chanukiyah was retrieved after the war by Willie's sister, Flory Asscher, who survived in hiding along with her parents. Last October, she presented the chanukiyah to Yad Vashem, adding to the museum's collection of artifacts, Shalev said.

The objects provide a tangible link to the personal stories of the Shoah victims. "The heart and core of the museum deals with human stories… We describe the Shoah through human stories," he said.

It also provided a jumping-off point to the evening's discussions. Yad Vashem hopes to duplicate the Dinner of Miracles in other Canadian cities. The support group has already received calls inquiring about the event from Winnipeg and Montreal, Ashkenazi said.

In the meantime, Yad Vashem is pressing ahead with one of its ambitious projects – recording the names of all six million Holocaust victims. Based on survivor testimony and the release of Soviet-era documentation, Yad Vashem now has 3.5 million names and expects that total to rise in April to four million as staff work their way through the Soviet materials. The museum's Hall of Names is designed to hold six million victims' names, Shalev said.

The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem has supported the Jerusalem museum with close to $7 million raised in the last four years, Ashkenazi said. Most of those funds are earmarked for the museum's educational programs.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A full accounting for Hamas terror

Once the Hamas leaders who govern Gaza decided last month to reject the extension of the six-month ceasefire with Israel, renewed fighting was essentially assured. But when they decided, by contrast, to renew their campaign of rocket and missile terror against the Israelis of the Negev, an Israeli response was a matter both of self-defence and of justice.

That response began last Saturday, eight days after the truce expired.

Israel's response has been unabating, precise and punishing. There is no denying the extent of the carnage and the heavy toll that has been exacted on the people in Gaza. But the point must be emphasized and re-emhasized that the target of the Israeli operation is the terrorist organization Hamas.

It is Hamas' infrastructure, operational capabilities, command structure and deeply murderous ways that Israel has now determined to stop.

Again and again, as recently as last Friday, the government of Israel urged and pleaded with the Hamas leadership to abandon its incessant rocket attacks against the citizens of Israel. But to no avail. The rocket campaign intensified. In the eight days after the expiry of the truce, Hamas fired some 300 rockets and mortars at Israel. In the preceding 12 months, Hamas had fired more than 3,000 rockets and mortars at Israel.

The mischievous hand of Tehran has been clearly at play behind the scenes, joined in a solidarity of violence and hatred with Ismail Haniyeh and Khaled Meshal, Hamas' two self-appointed leaders.

As of this writing, the Israel Defence Forces have blasted away at Hamas' military training camps, rocket-manufacturing facilities, weapons warehouses, tunnels used to smuggle weapons, and political strongholds for three days.

According to Palestinian sources, more than 300 Palestinians have been killed, the vast majority of them terrorists and militants. Several hundred Palestinians have been wounded. Alas, Palestinian civilians too have been caught in the mayhem, in the deadly web of deliberate exploitation practised upon them by their own leaders.

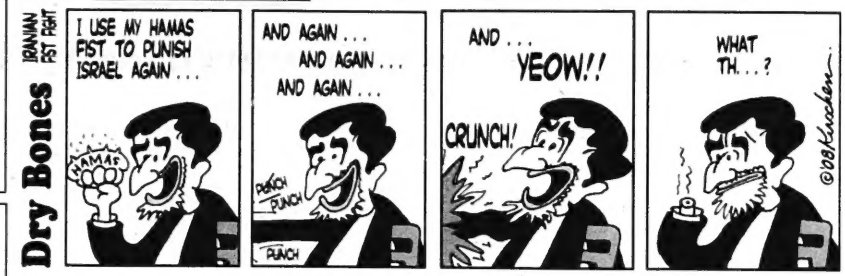
Two Israelis have been killed and about 20 wounded.

When asked on the weekend who was responsible for the current fighting in Gaza, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit answered: "Ask the party that controls Gaza."

Israel's actions against Hamas are justified. No country on earth would leave unanswered the wave upon wave of missile and rocket terror that Israel has had to endure. Israel has a right to defend its citizens. And after all other non-military options failed to prevent the rocket fire, this military response seems to be the only way.

25 years ago in The CJN

Victor Abadi, a jeweller in Aleppo, Syria, returned home from work to find his pregnant wife and two children murdered and their bodies mutilated. The news came to Judy Feld Carr, director of the Dr. Ronald Feld Fund for Jews in Arab Countries at Toronto's Beth Tzedec Congregation, who warned about the increasing dangers facing Syrian Jews.


Dry Bones
IRANIAN FIST FIGHT
I USE MY HAMAS FIST TO PUNISH ISRAEL AGAIN . . .
HAMAS
AND AGAIN . . . AND AGAIN . . . AND AGAIN . . .
PUNCH
PUNCH
AND . . . YEOW!!
CRUNCH!
WHAT TH. . . ?
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Lenient sentence for firebomber

Sadly, the Canadian judicial system has missed an opportunity to assert any meaningful influence in the fight against terrorism ("Firebomber gets four years in jail," Toronto edition; "'Terrorist' firebombings net four-year jail term," Montreal edition, CJN, Nov. 27).

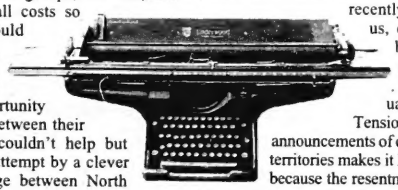
To think that Azim Ibragimov could perpetrate acts of terror against the Montreal Jewish community by firebombing our institutions and receive a sentence of only four years is pathetic and laughable. Had this act taken place in the United States, this individual would probably not see the light of day for decades. As a result of this abhorrently lenient sentence, Canada has now hung out the proverbial shingle to terrorists around the world: "Welcome to Canada. We are open for business."

Eric Gralnick
Cote St. Luc, Que.

* * *

Skeptical about Muslim/ Jewish 'twinning'

I'd be a lot more enthusiastic about the "enthusiasm and goodwill" engendered during the weekend of "twinning" of mosques and synagogues were it not for the giant elephant in the interfaith parlour ("Muslims, Jews bond over Abraham," CJN, Dec. 4). I'm referring, of course, to Israel, the Jewish state that gives rise to so much friction between the two groups, the "elephant" that had to be ignored at all costs so that the warm feelings could blossom. Call me a skeptic, but while many Canadian Muslims and Jews saw this weekend as a unique opportunity to build bonds and bridges between their communities, I'm afraid I couldn't help but see it as something else: an attempt by a clever Saudi king to drive a wedge between North American Jews and the Jewish state.



I say that because this "twinning" project is part of King Abdullah's larger "interfaith" scheme. At the international level, it consists of hosting conferences and lobbying the United Nations to prohibit "defamation" of religion (so no one will be able to say anything critical about his religion); in North America, it consists of this twinning effort, a way for Muslims and Jews to "get past" the primary impediment to their building a relationship – that pesky Jewish state. And ultimately, that's precisely what the Saudi king aims to do – get past Israel, i.e. consign it to the past. The reason he's so keen for it to be gone is that for someone with his worldview, Jewish sovereignty in Israel is an insult to Islam and its doctrines.

Of course, not too many Jews would be willing to partake of his hospitality were he to make his intentions so obvious. For that reason, he has had the good sense to make them more palatable by dressing them up in the sheep's clothing of "peace" and "interfaith dialogue" and "our common Patriarch, Abraham."

In its 60 years of existence, Israel has withstood every military offensive its enemies have thrown at it. With well-intended but dangerously naive North American Jews backing it, however, the Wahhabis' "charm" offensive may yet succeed where tanks, intifadahs, aerial bombardment and suicide bombers have failed.

Mindy Alter
Toronto

* * *

Idea of Jerusalem undivided will backfire

Recently, I read Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's comments recommending giving back disputed sections of the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. He argues that doing so is the only way to preserve Israel in the future. Then I read that the new Jerusalem mayor, Nir Barkat, elected without the participation of the Palestinians, plans to build more settlements for young Jewish couples in Jerusalem.

People, we are messing this up. The idea of a Jerusalem undivided – an idea I also cherished until recently – is going to backfire on us, quite literally. We must give back disputed territories or we risk losing the whole country, because we are creating a situation that cannot be sustained. Tension created by Israeli government announcements of continued settlement in disputed territories makes it harder for Jews in the Diaspora, because the resentment and pain it causes spreads, as any university student will tell you. The more we cling to hawkishness, the more we worsen the situation for Jewish people all over the world, as we endanger the lives of Jewish people within Israel.

We must admit that the measures we take to ensure our security are ultimately illusory and do not provide security at all. Rather, they ensure instability and a continued state of war. It's time for every Jew to say, "enough." Let's every single one of us take a good look at the map of Israel, and the ridiculous little bits of land we insist on hanging on to out of spite. If we love the land as much as we say we do, we have to share it or we risk losing it all.

Rebecca Rustin
Montreal

LET THEM GO...

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Perspectives

IAF strike is Israel's version of 'shock and awe'

By AMOS HAREL
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Above: Israeli planes bomb the northern part of the Gaza Strip. *[Oren Ziv/Jinipix/Israel Sun photo]*

The events along Israel's southern front, which commenced at 11:30 a.m. on Dec. 27, are the closest thing there is to a war between Israel and the Islamist terrorist group Hamas. At the time of publication of The CJN, it is difficult to ascertain (geographically) how far the violence will reach and how long it will continue before international intervention forces call a halt to the hostilities.

However, Israel's opening salvo was not merely another "surgical" operation or pinpoint strike. This was the harshest Israel Defence Forces assault on Gaza since the territory was captured during the Six Day War in 1967.

Palestinian sources in Gaza reported that 40 targets were destroyed in a span of three to five minutes. This was a massive attack, much along the lines of what the Americans termed "shock and awe" during their invasion of Iraq in March 2003, with simultaneous, heavy bombardment of a number of targets on which Israel spent months gathering intelligence.

The military "target bank" includes dozens of additional targets linked to Hamas, some of which will certainly come under attack in the coming days.

As in the U.S. assault on Iraq and the Israeli response to the abduction of IDF reservists Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser at the outset of the Second Lebanon War, little to no weight was apparently given to the question of harming innocent civilians. From Israel's standpoint, Hamas, which persistently fires rockets while using the civilian population as cover, had plenty of opportunities to save face and lower its demands. In stubbornly continuing to launch rockets in recent weeks, it brought this assault on itself.

A final decision on the precise timing of the operation was made on Saturday morning in consultations between Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Defence Minister Ehud Barak, the IDF chief of staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, and army generals. The cabinet approved the assault in its Dec. 24 meeting.

After that, the government waited for the opportunity to strike. Apparently, an intelligence tip indicating that members of the Hamas military wing were convening for a meeting expedited the decision-making process and gave the go-ahead to act.

According to initial reports from Gaza, a number of senior Hamas officials were hit, yet the scope of the harm done to the group's leadership has yet to be precisely determined. The Israeli objective is clear: deal as serious a blow as possible to the Hamas chain of command in order to hinder its operating capabilities. It may not prevent heavy rocket fire from reaching the Negev towns, but it will likely make it more difficult for Hamas to carry out the more damaging attacks against Israel.

From last Saturday afternoon until early this week, the IAF maintained a significant presence in the skies over Gaza in hopes of intercepting rocket-launching cells belonging to Hamas and Islamic Jihad. But the rocket barrage that rained down on Netivot this past weekend (where one Israeli was killed by a Grad rocket which directly struck a house), Ashkelon and the communities abutting the Gaza Strip was only the appetizer.

The defence establishment was girding for a daily round of rocket fire that was expected to exceed 100 projectiles, some of which are likely to reach the maximum range currently within Hamas' capability – 40 kilometres, a distance that extends to the outskirts of Be'er Sheva and Ashdod.

It would be reasonable to assume that Hamas is preparing to spring another Hezbollah-style operational surprise, from attempting to shoot down IAF aircraft to targeting key strategic sites such as the Ashdod port.

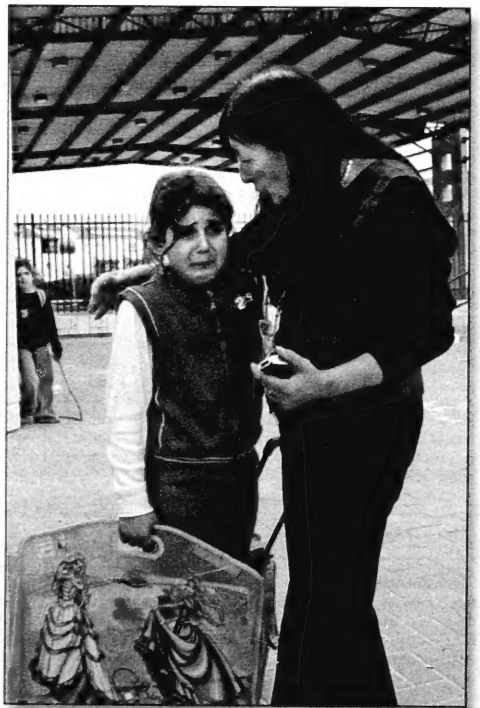
The IDF Home Front Command therefore launched a massive deployment of its forces on Monday, tasked with instructing the residents of the Negev to remain in their homes (the urgency of the instruction is proportional to the residents' proximity to the Gaza Strip). In addition, a few hundred reservist soldiers received call-up notices.

Israel's continued hesitation to take further action against Hamas is rooted in the trauma it suffered in the wake of the Second Lebanon War. The major question, of course, is not related to the operational capabilities of the air force, but to whether or not to launch a ground invasion. Would the government resolve to do so and is the IDF capable of successfully carrying out a mission such as the one it failed in against Hezbollah?

Until such decisions are made, the IAF was expected to continue its assault, complemented by limited activity from relatively small ground units.

As of Monday, it appeared that Israel has assigned modest goals for itself: weakening Hamas' rule in Gaza and restoring a prolonged lull along the border under terms that are more convenient for Israel following an internationally imposed compromise. Hamas, in its continued strikes on the Negev in recent weeks, erred in judging Israeli intentions and has been dragged into a war that it is doubtful it wanted. Now, Israel needs to be careful not to fall into a trap of its own.

Below: An Israeli police officer evacuates children in the southern Israel town of Sderot on Dec. 21, following a Qassam rocket attack by Palestinian militants from the neighbouring Gaza Strip. *[Edi Israel/Flash 90 photo]*



Opinions

Who's looking out for Gilad?

It was a moment of inspiration: 1,000 Montreal Jews huddled together in a synagogue for a memorial service for the victims of the Mumbai massacre and Chabad House. Chassidic, Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews all came. It was a powerful display of Jewish unity.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

But afterward, I was left with a nagging doubt: would this unity last? Much like the old saying, "There are no atheists in foxholes," there are no quarrels during tragedies. Disasters have the unique ability to unite Jews in common cause.

But when things get more comfortable, our unity fades. At the beginning of the intifadah, thousands of Jews rallied in support of Israel. It was a critical moment, a time "when the chips were down," and even haredi Jews who wouldn't consider themselves Zionists came to support the Jewish state. But once the violence quieted down, people stopped expressing their support for Israel. Jewish unity is much more difficult to achieve in good times.

In difficult times, our hearts are touched by others' suffering. Empathy can affect even the most evil human beings. While murdering six million Jews, Adolf Hitler went out of his way to spare the life of his mother's Jewish doctor. Empathy is so powerful an emotion that even Hitler could empathize with a Jew he knew.

But empathy isn't enough. Our commitment to others goes beyond gut reactions. What's required is a hard-headed sense of responsibility. True responsibility isn't affected by emotional fluctuations.

Responsibility is greatest toward your family. Judah, when asking to take charge of his younger brother, Benjamin, says to his father, "I myself will guarantee his safety. You can hold me personally responsible for him."

Judah's proclamation stands as the paradigm of Jewish responsibility, of how every Jew is responsible for one another.

Yet, we have forgotten one lonely, lost Jew. All of us should be asking ourselves: "Where is Gilad?" On June 25, 2006, Gilad Schalit was abducted by Hamas. Since then, he has not heard the voices of his parents, his siblings or his friends.

Sadly, other voices also remain silent. Jews around the world do too little to call for Gilad's release. It's time we take our responsibility to Gilad seriously.

The Canadian Rabbinic Caucus has initiated a letter-writing campaign on Shalit's behalf entitled "Where is Gilad?". (At www.cicweb.ca, you can quickly fill out an e-mail form that goes to multiple MPs.)

We must raise our voices with the Shalit family and ask "Where is Gilad?" But we must also wonder why we have done so little. Where are Judah's descendants now to say, "You can hold me personally responsible for him"? Where is the State of Israel? Where is the Jewish community?

Canadian Jews should follow Cotler on Iran

For years, Jews have watched in frustration as Iran has progressed in its demented but determined march to develop nuclear weapons. Our community leaders have been as impotent as the leaders of the world's great democracies, including Canada, the United States, Great Britain and Israel. But in early December, former federal justice minister Irwin Cotler launched an initiative that may provide some badly needed traction in this struggle.

Gil Troy in Montreal

Cotler marked the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by demanding that the United Nations and the world sanction Iran for threatening Israel with genocide.

In a twist worthy of a lawyer who understands that ugly words spawn evil actions, Cotler wants to punish Iran for crimes it has clearly committed – calling for genocide – while sidestepping the murkier debate over Iran's nuclear ambitions.

True, it's hypocritical that self-styled European pacifists tolerate Iran's nuclear plans. True, the idea of a nuclear Iran is terrifying, considering the Middle East arms race it would trigger, and the boost it would give Iran's terrorist twins, Hezbollah and Hamas, let alone the danger to Israel and the United States, which Iran frequently threatens. Still, people can disagree about Iran's nuclear intentions. By contrast, Iran's genocidal threats are unambiguous, easily documented, and patently illegal.

The Holocaust taught us that the world cannot be casual about dictators who threaten genocide. This insight spurred the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Never again should a dictator be allowed to threaten mass murder with impunity.

The case against Iran is well documented, and chilling. Parading a missile through Tehran with the words "Wipe Israel off the Map" as mobs scream "Death to Israel" constitutes genocidal incitement. Cotler nearly gags as he quotes Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's characterization of Israel as "a filthy germ," "a stain of disgrace" and "a stinking corpse."

Cotler's action plan is clear. Countries such as Canada should lead, starting by referring the case to the UN Security Council, as Article 8 of the Genocide Convention mandates. Sanctions and boycotts, as well as filings at the High Court of Justice or the International Criminal Court, should follow. Meanwhile, German companies – who together make Germany Iran's largest trading partner – and other corporations must be confronted with their moral responsibility, given Iran's repeated calls for genocide.

Iran should be treated as a pariah, even suspended from the United Nations, unless this criminal rhetoric stops. This push is not a one-man crusade. Cotler filed an 80-page petition with the endorsement of other human rights activists, including the former UN high commissioner for human rights, Louise Arbour. Arbour has repeatedly blasted Israeli policy. But to her credit, she, too, recognized that if human rights means anything, for international law to maintain any credibility, it must remain illegal for UN member states to threaten to annihilate other member states.

Canada's Jewish community should follow Cotler's cues. Institutional leaders and individuals should do whatever they can to press Ottawa, the UN, the United States, NGOs and human rights activists to punish Iran.

As the creaky apparatus of international law tries to find redemption – after decades of irrelevance and biased demonization of Israel – activists should run with this effort to outfox Iran. All Iranian governmental representatives, wherever they travel, should face public denunciations or ostracism, similar to what Soviet diplomats endured in the 1970s. And all the human rights hypocrites who demonize Israel should be confronted repeatedly with the following question: "Before we talk about human rights anywhere else, I want to know if you condemn Iran's explicit calls for genocide of a fellow member of the United Nations?"

If Cotler's case is compelling enough to get Arbour's assent, there should be other surprising allies that emerge, too. Alas, as of this writing, the Canadian Jewish community has been silent on Cotler's initiative. This isn't a time for dithering or making nice. We need vigorous, visionary leadership to turn Iran's ugly threats against itself and threaten Iran with pariah status. We must explain to our fellow citizens and MPs that if human rights in the 21st century is to mean anything, this is the first test case.

Where are our leaders – and our institutions – when we need them?

America's first Jewish president?

African-American novelist and Nobel prize winner Toni Morrison once famously asserted that former United States president Bill Clinton was America's "first black president." In a 1998 New Yorker article, Morrison said that Clinton was "blacker than any actual black person who could ever be elected in our children's lifetime."

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

History, of course, has proven Morrison wrong. A mere decade after her controversial statement, the recent U.S. election posed an interesting coda to her article. And now U.S. Judge Abner Mikva has declared Barack Obama to be America's "first Jewish president." Riffing on Morrison's turn of phrase, Mikva – a former congressman from Chicago, a former University of Chicago law professor and a retired federal judge – describes Obama as possessing a "*yiddishe neshumah*," a "Jewish soul."

What did Morrison mean and what does Mikva mean in making these statements?

Somewhat satirically, Morrison's article suggested that Clinton be considered "black" not racially, but culturally, saying he exemplified "almost every trope of blackness: single-parent household, born poor, working-class, saxophone-playing, McDonald's-and-junk-food-loving boy from Arkansas."

Written as Clinton was facing impeachment by the U.S. House of Representatives, Morrison compared what she saw as his unjustified persecution to the threat that hung over even successful black men in America. "No matter how smart you are, how hard you work, how much coin you earn for us, we will put you in your place or put you out of the place you have somehow… achieved. You will be fired from your job, sent away in disgrace." She later explained that she was trying to convey that Clinton was "treated like a black on the street, already guilty, already a perp."

The characterization took on a life of its own and was used frequently to evoke Clinton's many friendships with, and appointments of, African-Americans and his sensitivity to the history and consequences of racism in America.

Mikva, the child of Jewish immigrant parents from a shtetl on the Russian-Polish border, sees in Obama, whom he mentored, quintessentially Jewish values – a "*yiddishe neshumah*," a person with "a sensitive, sympathetic personality… who understands where you are coming from."

Reading accounts of Mikva's declaration about the president-elect reminded me of when I first learned about Mikva, this politician and statesman with the distinctively Jewish name. I was in graduate school, and friends from Chicago spoke of him as a source of personal inspiration.

Now in his early 80s, with a reputation for personal integrity, Mikva was raised with a strong, secular sense of Jewish identity by a father who was profoundly influenced by the atheism and anarchism of the Russian Revolution. With no formal religious training, Mikva absorbed the Yiddish language of his household. His connection with Judaism was forged by his more religious grandfather, who would "sneak" young Abner into shul against his father's wishes. In one of history's ironies, Mikva's daughter became a rabbi.

If we were to probe Mikva's recent statement about Obama further, to develop it more substantially, as Morrison did with her remark about Clinton, we might see other reasons why he referred to Obama as "Jewish."

It's easy to imagine that the former judge would have been attracted to another child of a father from elsewhere, who – as a member of a minority facing the obstacles of prejudice – had to figure out how he fit into America's promise and reality. The tropes of Jewishness, to borrow Morrison's locution, include much that Obama exemplifies: the value of education, close relations with grandparents, contending with suspicions, dual loyalties, being saddled with an odd name, negotiating a sense of identity that is at once particular and universal, being cosmopolitan, urban, and eloquent – the latter being seen as both positive (a mark of intelligence) and negative (a tool of deceit). Moreover, in the culture wars of the recent election campaigns, Obama's side did not sit comfortably with hunting and shooting. What could be more Jewish?

Most importantly perhaps, for a man who lived through the civil rights era and knew that the Jewish historical experience motivated many U.S. Jews to struggle on behalf of others, Mikva surely sees in Obama someone who similarly learns from and embraces, but also transcends, the historical struggle of the people with whom he most closely identifies.

The Kirshner File

Stalin's biographer turns his attention to Jerusalem

The gradual dissolution of the Soviet Union from the late 1980s onward riveted, among others, a young British investment banker named Simon Sebag Montefiore, the scion of a long line of Jewish bankers.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Montefiore, whose ancestor was Sir Moses Montefiore, a legendary 19th-century financier and philanthropist related to the Rothschild clan, was working in New York City as the Soviet empire broke up in an incremental sea change.

A pent-up writer whose imagination was fired by this historic event, he dropped everything, even his cushy job in the concrete canyons of Manhattan, to witness these momentous developments on a first-hand basis. Embarking on what would be "a great adventure," and carrying little more than rudimentary possessions, he threw himself into the thick of things as he travelled around the tottering Soviet Union, particularly the Caucasus, Ukraine and Central Asia.

"I saw history being made," said Montefiore, who, as a freelance foreign correspondent, recorded his impressions for a raft of British and American publications ranging from the Sunday Times and the Daily Mail to the Spectator and the New Republic. "Everywhere I went, there was civil war and chaos."

Over the next few years, he regularly visited fairly remote destinations from Georgia to Azerbajan. These trips not only further whetted his appetite for writing. They also strengthened his interest in Russia, the ancestral home of his mother's family.

"All my books come from that period," said Montefiore, who lives in London with his wife, Santa Palmer-Tomkinson, a best-selling author of romantic historical fiction, and their two children, Lily and Sasha.

Since then, Montefiore, 43, has churned out a succession of historical works, as well as one novel, on Russia. Best-sellers, they have been published in no less than 33 languages, a fact that clearly attests to his popularity as a historian.

Catherine the Great and Potemkin, a sweeping epic of love, sex, power and conquest about a German princess-cum-empress who ruled Russia as a reformer until her death in 1796, was Montefiore's first history book, and was published in 2000.

He followed that up with two rigorous biographies of Joseph Stalin, the Soviet dictator. Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar appeared in 2003, and Young Stalin, which Miramax is currently developing into a feature film, came out several years later. Sashenka, an intricately plotted novel about a Russian Jewish family based on many true stories and revolving around a beautiful, rich and headstrong woman, was published in 2008.

In keeping with his yen for newly discovered facts, Montefiore thoroughly researched each of his books. As a reporter in the now-defunct Soviet Union, he came to realize that Russian archives were ripe for the picking, and that he needed to learn Russian in order to mine them.

Learning the language was easier than gaining access to heretofore sealed archives in Georgia and Moscow. Yet in the face of seemingly endless frustrations and stress, Montefiore prevailed, unearthing new material that considerably brightened up his books and prompted a famous British publisher, Lord Weidenfeld, to observe: "It is very rare to find a historian capable of such serious research and such journalistic verve."

Montefiore's persistence and hard work paid off in spades, enabling him to draw original and nuanced portraits of his subjects, be they Stalin, Catherine's lover Grigory Potemkin, or the fictional Jewish woman Sashenka Zeitlin. Thanks to the archival gems he found, Montefiore was able to draw a rounded picture of Stalin's personality.

As he puts it in Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar: "The new archives confirm that his real genius was something different – and surprising. He could charm people. He was what is now known as a 'people person.' While incapable of true empathy on one hand, he was a master of friendships on the other. He constantly lost his temper, but when he set his mind to charming a man, he was irresistible."

Although he does not admire him and believes he was intrinsically evil, Montefiore contends that Stalin – a Georgian born as Josef Vissarionovich Djugashvili – was a hugely important, fascinating, complex and misunderstood leader without whose material support World War II and the battle against Nazism could not have been won.

Stalin's anti-Semitism sprouted later in his life. "He didn't start off as an anti-Semite," said Montefiore, who was recently in Toronto as a guest of the International Festival of Authors. "There is no real tradition of anti-Semitism in Georgia." In Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar, Montefiore writes that Stalin was always suspicious of Jews, because they lacked a homeland and thus gave him the impression that they were mystical, intangible and otherworldly. But Stalin's Jewish confederate, Lazar Kagonowich, maintained that Stalin's view was formed by the Jewishness of his political enemies, notably Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev.

Simon Sebag Montefiore

[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

Stalin, he says, emerged as a "vicious and obsessional" anti-Semite after 1945, when he grew ever more wary of the United States and noticed that the Holocaust had touched and awakened Soviet Jews. In his view, he may well have gone through with his plan to deport Jewish citizens to Siberia had he not died so suddenly. "The evidence for this is very dodgy, but he was certainly capable of it, and personally orchestrated the Doctors' Plot."

Despite Montefiore's immense interest in Stalin, he rates his book on Catherine the Great as his favourite, due to her zeal as a forward-looking westernizer and her long romance with Potemkin. He disputes allegations that she was an anti-Semite.

Montefiore contends that Sashenka was a labour of love, one of the happiest experiences of his career. "I always wanted to write it. It's a real Jewish story. But I must tell you that many people thought I was insane to try something so different."

As he points out in his acknowledgements, Sashenka was, in part, inspired by archival tales of the Jewish wives of Stalin's henchmen and the arrests of writers such as Isaac Babel.

Currently, he is working on a book on Jerusalem through three millennia and the lives of its kings, conquerors and creators. Scheduled to be published in September 2010, it is a pet project, given his fascination with the Middle East and his family's connections to Israel.

"It'll be hard to write, because there is so much material," said Montefiore, whose father is descended from a line of wealthy Moroccan and Italian Jews. "I expect it to be my biggest challenge."

Montefiore's great-great uncle, Sir Moses Montefiore, was born in Livorno, Italy, in 1784 and settled in Britain as a young man. His wife, Judith Cohen, whom he married in 1812, was related to Nathan Meyer Rothschild, for whom Montefiore's stock brokerage firm acted as a representative. Retiring at the age of 40, Moses Montefiore was president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews for 39 years, a tenure that has never been matched.

A protector of distressed Jews in the Diaspora, Montefiore was also a benefactor of the Jewish community in Jerusalem. The windmill that was built with his money still stands as a beacon in Yemin Moshe.

"He was an astonishing and amazing character," said Montefiore, who counts among his friends Prince Charles and the British Conservative party leader, David Cameron. "He used the prestige of the British empire to help persecuted Jews all over the world and his fortune to beautify and expand Jerusalem. He was an admirable person in every respect."

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Veteran teacher 'always on the floor' with young kids

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Lorna Leibovici, a nursery and Grade 1 general studies teacher at Associated Hebrew Schools' Posluns Education Centre, has a choice of seats in her two classrooms.

In her Grade 1 classroom, there's a student-sized chair that's been hand-painted for her and adorned with the words "Mrs. Leibovici's special chair." Another one is labelled her "magic power chair" and is stationed in front of a computer. There's also a tall, shapely stool known as the "throne," which is sometimes used for reading stories, or she might sit on a wicker rocker in the nursery classroom.

But she says she rarely sits in a chair.

"I'll show you exactly how I sit in the morning," she said in a before-school interview, nimbly assuming a cross-legged position on the floor of her nursery classroom.

Lorna Leibovici with Latke Man in her nursery classroom last month. *[Frances Kraft photo]*

"I'm always on the floor, and I'm never clean. I had blue under my nails for two weeks from painting Maccabees."

A veteran educator with more energy than some of her younger counterparts, Leibovici has worked at Associated for the better part of three decades, following a five-year stint at Or Haemet Sephardic School.

As a longtime teacher, "you have to be open-minded, willing to learn and willing to try [new things]... I think you really have to stretch yourself," she said.

Despite her experience in education, she tells her students that she's "still a little kid. I've just been around longer."

As a child, the Toronto native used to set up her dolls classroom-style at home. Her sister would sit with them, and the future teacher would preside at the front of her "class," entering marks in a workbook and blowing a pretend pitch pipe before asking them to sing.

After high school, she attended Lakeshore Teachers College, then began her career teaching Grade 2 and kindergarten at Wilmington Avenue Public School before taking time off to stay home with her two young sons. She earned her primary specialist's certification through a summer course.

Leibovici enjoys her work so much that she said everyone should have an opportunity to spend a few days in a primary classroom like hers. "You can be yourself. You can be happy. You can sing."

Notwithstanding her effervescent personality, the fact that she starts and ends each school day with a song, and the warmth she demonstrates by signing all the children's work with a smiley face and the words, "Love, Mrs. L.," inside a heart, Leibovici said she is "very strict.

"I truly believe students have to be respectful of their school, of their environment, and of each other. I try to enforce it in a nice way.

"Their time in school should be joyful."

A lesson from the teacher: *Leibovici shares this mantra with students who are having difficulty, pointedly ticking off each word on the fingers of one hand: "The more you do it, the better you get... and then you get to be the best."*

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Jewish material added to genealogical site

By BILL GLADSTONE
Special to The CJN

The Internet-based genealogical company Ancestry.com has added a major series of Jewish collections to its website, including many data bases that may be searched free of charge for users who open a free account.

Ancestry's recently added Jewish Family History Collection offers a wide assortment of Jewish tax lists, voters lists, business directories, police registration lists, Holocaust records, cemetery transcriptions, nominal indexes and other resources, many related to places in eastern Europe in the 19th century. Countries and regions represented include Austria, Belarus, Bessarabia, France, Galicia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Russia, as well as Australia, Canada, England and the United States.

The data bases were originally accessible only at the popular website Jewishgen.org, and are still available there. A volunteer-built, non-commercial site known as the home of Jewish genealogy on the Internet, Jewishgen recently signed an agreement allowing Ancestry to offer the data bases simultaneously.

The deal helps Jewishgen attain valuable new funding and gives Ancestry a valuable new customer base. A third party to the agreement is the American Joint Distribution Committee.

I typed the generic Jewish name "Abraham Cohen" into the search engine and clicked on the search button. Up came an impressive list of hits. There are 308 Abraham Cohens in the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry – 15 in a list of U.S. consular posts in Israel from 1857 to 1935; five in a Belarus names index; three in a list of US civil war veterans. Good old Abe appears everywhere from Galveston to Galicia. There are more than 100 linked data bases to explore, some requiring an Ancestry subscription. The name Sarah Levy produces a similar cornucopia of references.

The field narrows considerably, however, when one types in a less common name such as Naftolin, the surname of my maternal grandparents from Belarus. Up comes a variety of Lithuanian birth, marriage, divorce and passport records, as well as material from Belarus, Canada and the United States.

Continued on page 19

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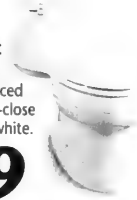

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Jewish Life

A day to check the road map

By RABBI WAYNE ALLEN

There was once a fellow who lost his way and had to make inquiries as to how far he was from his destination.

A wizened old man on the road told him, "If you continue to go in the direction you are going, it's about 25,000 miles. But if you turn around, it's about three."

The Hebrew word for repentance derives from the same root meaning as the word for "to turn around." Proceeding in the wrong direction can be as much a waste of time as it is frustrating. The same can be said about perpetuating bad habits or complacently continuing misdeeds.

Sometimes we just need to turn around.

Sensitive to this idea, the Jewish calendar is punctuated with moments that are particularly helpful for changing direction.

On four days during the year, we are encouraged to check the road map of our lives to see if, in fact, we are going in the right direction or if we must turn ourselves around.

One such day falls on Jan. 6, 2009. It's called a "fast day" – specifically, the Fast of the 10th of Tevet, the 10th day of the 10th biblical month.

But to think of it only as a day of self-abnegation misses the point entirely.

In his exposition of Jewish law called the Mishneh Torah (Laws of Fast Days 1:1), Moses Maimonides, explains that while there is a historical remembrance attached to each of the four fast days – with the 10th of Tevet commemorating the beginning of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century BCE – the purpose of each of these days is "to arouse all hearts and open the paths of repentance; to be a recollection of our evil ways… that has caused us such grief."

These fast days are opportunities for us to measure how well we're doing in the good we're doing – or are supposed to be doing.

In particular, the 10th of Tevet comes a mere three months after Yom Kippur. It's a kind of seasonal check-up to determine whether our observance of the Day of Atonement has had any measurable impact on our behaviour. Before we let too much time pass, we need to evaluate whether or not we're going in the right direction. It's far easier and far better to go back a few months and recommit to the words we recited on Yom Kippur than to proceed and be lost for the rest of the year.

In a moment of reflection, American poet Edna St. Vincent Millay once said: "It is not true that life is one damn thing after another – it's one damn thing over and over." This sad observation is true unless we are willing to change.

That change is possible only when we take the time and make the effort. The 10th of Tevet is an appropriate time to start.

Rabbi Allen is the spiritual leader of Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Toronto.

Moving from Genesis to Exodus

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

As the book of Genesis ends and we begin reading the book of Exodus, a number of threads from Genesis continue into Exodus. Certainly, the fate of the Israelites at the end of Genesis is left unresolved, as the clan of Jacob's descendants returns to Egypt and we are told of Joseph's death. The fate of these descendants plays out in the opening chapters of Exodus. They are foreigners in a foreign land and are quickly enslaved.

The end of Genesis presents a picture of the Israelites being sustained – safe and secure – by Joseph. The book of Exodus quickly moves things toward persecution and slavery. The narrative progression from one book to the other takes a positive picture and shows its quick progression into the negative. Interestingly, the portrayal of the female between these two books unfolds in the opposite direction.

Joseph's life is largely framed by the absence of a woman's presence. His mother, Rachel, dies while giving birth to his younger brother, Benjamin. With Rachel's death, all female voices in the family stop. Joseph is the victim of isolation, favouritism and, ultimately, kidnapping, slavery and imprisonment.

Throughout the book of Genesis, the image of the well – water from within the earth – is strongly connected with the female. We meet many of our matriarchs at wells, and the image of life-giving water speaks strongly of the female's life-affirming qualities. Not surprisingly, when Joseph is kidnapped by his brothers, he is thrown into a pit that the text tells us "has no water." Joseph's life is repeatedly missing the life-affirming qualities of the female as he is thrown from pit to pit.

From the stark absence of the female in the Joseph narrative, the book of Exodus quickly moves us to the strong informing voices of the women in Egypt

Years later, Jacob, Joseph's father, will lie on his deathbed and bless Joseph with the blessing of "breasts and womb," the compassion of the female. As Joseph's father, Jacob is trying to bless his son with the very things that he sees were absent.

From the stark absence of the female in the Joseph narrative, the book of Exodus quickly moves us to the strong informing voices of the women in Egypt. When Pharaoh decrees that baby boys are to be killed on birthing stones, it's the midwives who refuse to execute the order.

When Pharaoh decrees that all baby boys are to be drowned in the Nile, it's Yochevet who disobeys, and it's Miriam who protects and Pharaoh's daughter who saves. If not for these women, Moses would have shared the fate of the other baby boys, and there would have been no redemption.

While we read, sadly, of the decline of the Israelites after Joseph dies, at the same time, the text brings women's voices back to the forefront, and we begin to hope. Throughout the text of Exodus, women will continue to be life-affirming and grounding for that generation and beyond.

The Talmud speaks often of the honour and respect that we owe to our parents, but it captures the uniqueness of a woman when it tells us that when Rabbi Joseph heard the sound of his mother's footsteps, he would say, "I must rise before the presence that is now approaching."

Jewish Life

Babylonians and the Bible

By ALEX GROPPER

Past Forward

The land of Babylon had a profound impact on the development of Israel and its faith. Although Egypt is featured prominently in biblical stories, it is generally conceded by scholars that Babylon and its environs had a much greater impact on Jews as a people, as well as on our history.

Archeology can tell us much about this relationship. During excavations in the latter part of the 19th century, in Mesopotamia, where Babylonia was located, cuneiform tablets were discovered. When the cuneiform was translated, scholars found stories that bore striking similarities to certain biblical stories.

Some of these documents were originally discovered in the palace of the great Assyrian ruler, Ashurbanipal, whose library was one of the greatest collections of documents in antiquity. It was the discovery of this library that alerted scholars to documents, in this case cuneiform tablets that were copies of texts that belonged to a much earlier period.

We would not have been able to read these stories if it were not for our ability to decipher cuneiform. In a great feat of scholarship, cuneiform was first deciphered in the 1850s. Unlike hieroglyphics, which took more than two decades after Napoleon's soldiers discovered the Rosetta Stone imbedded in the walls of Fort Rashid to crack, cuneiform took less than a decade to decipher, after the discovery of the Behistun Inscription, in western Iran, that provided the key to its decipherment.

Once the decipherment had been accomplished, scholars could get to work and translate the myriad documents that were being dug up in various sites in Mesopotamia, or modern Iraq, which at that time was a backwater province of the decaying Ottoman Empire.

As in Egypt, it was the British and French who vied with each other to see who could uncover the most sites. By and large, it was the British who succeeded, but by the end of the 19th century, Americans and Germans had also gotten into the act. In fact, it was the Germans, under Robert Koldewey, who began the systematic excavations of Babylon at the end of the 19th century

What they turned up were myriad documents written on clay tablets, and in the process, they even uncovered hitherto unknown civilizations such as that of the Sumerians, who are generally credited with inventing civilization. This discovery has been celebrated in the book History Begins at Sumer, written by the eminent American Sumerologist and Yale professor, Samuel Noah Kramer.

One of the things the Sumerians invented was cuneiform writing. By the middle of the third millennium BCE, they had used cuneiform to write down the world's first great story, the Epic of Gilgamesh. In this story, a flood that is similar to the one in the Bible is mentioned. However, this story is at least 1,500 to 2,000 years older than the story of Noah.

In the Epic, a place very much like the Garden of Eden, called Dilmun, is mentioned. The English archeologist Geoffrey Bibby wrote a fascinating book called Searching for Dilmun, in which he attempts to equate the island of Bahrain with this mythical land.

Another fascinating discovery was made by French archeologists at the end of the 19th century at the site of Tello. It was a law code belonging to Hammurabi, king of the first dynasty of Babylon, circa 1750 BCE. The code is now exhibited in the Louvre, in Paris.

Some of the laws bear a striking similarity to biblical injunctions belonging to the *lex talonis* type ("eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth"). Once again, scholars have dated them to a much earlier period than those found in the Bible.

However, it was the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple in 586 BCE, as well as the subsequent captivity of the Jews, that would leave an indelible mark on our history, as we will see in my next column.

Ancient Jewish coins

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

The Jewish Highway

So did you get gelt?

No, not the chocolate kind but honest-to-goodness gelt. Maybe you were lucky enough to receive a genuine Judaean coin for Chanukah. Or perhaps you want to know more about the ancient Jewish coins tucked away in the back of your drawer. Here's where you should invest some time to learn about them – and our history.

For a good introduction into minting in the Land of Israel, check out Ancient Coins of the Jewish People. **[tinyurl.com/anccoins]** Coins were first minted in Gaza about 400 BCE and later in Jerusalem about 500 years later. The earliest coin known to be minted in Jerusalem bears a picture of a lily and the word "Yehud." In what was an incredible symmetry with the past, the Bank of Israel reproduced this same design when it issued its One New Sheqel coin in 1985. **[tinyurl.com/yehud]**

From there, click over to the Handbook of Biblical Numismatics **[tinyurl.com/bibnumis]** and the informative but dated entry at JewishEncyclopedia.com. **[tinyurl.com/jewnumis]** Now, you are ready to appreciate the Menorah Coin Project, which calls itself the world's No. 1 databank on biblical/Judaean coins. There are thousands of images of coins to pore over. **[menorahcoinproject.org]**

In Exodus 20:4, we are warned against making "a graven image, nor any manner of likeness of any thing that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth." **[tinyurl.com/torah-graven]** That restriction posed a challenge to Jews who began minting coins from the reign of Hasmonean king John Hyrcanus in 134 BCE to the end of the Second Revolt in 135 C.E. Unlike the Persians, Syrians, Egyptians and Romans who decorated their coins with busts of their emperors, the Jews turned elsewhere for inspiration. See Lulavs, Lilies, and Lyres in Jewish Heritage Online Magazine. **[jhom.com/topics/money]**

Are you sitting on a cache of coins from the time of the Maccabees – or a hoard from the time of Herod – and want to find out what they're worth? Then join in at the Forum Ancient Coins' biblical and Judean coins numismatics discussion board. Not only do most people pose questions, but they also scan their coins. One person wanted to know whether his coin really was an antique. The answer: "This is [a] modern coin. The easy way to tell is the Hebrew on the coin – it is new Hebrew, not ancient." **[tinyurl.com/coinforum]**

How would a resident of ancient Jerusalem feel if he could hold a handful of modern Israeli change? Strange familiarity. Since the State of Israel was founded, its mint has always looked to the past for the designs and symbols to engrave onto its coins. The Jerusalem Through Coins website does a great job of illustrating ancient coins with grapes, pomegranates and, of course, menorahs, alongside their modern counterparts. (Note: page loads slowly and some images are missing.) **[tinyurl.com/oldnewcoins]**

Before you buy, be careful! In Ancient Coins & Modern Fakes, Dennis Kroh writes about notorious and common coin scams. "There have been forgeries of ancient coins for as long as there has been coinage." Novices to coin collecting are amazed that coins of the ancient world are obtainable at all for any price. (They are all in museums, aren't they!) Kroh says it's no wonder that when a tourist purchases an "ancient" coin or two, they are usually paying much more for a counterfeit than what the authentic item would cost. Although his essay doesn't focus on Israel or Internet sales, virtual travellers should keep its lessons in mind. **[tinyurl.com/fakecoins]**

For more advice, there's the American Israel Numismatic Association **[amerisrael.com]** and the online community of numismatists, the Ancient and Medieval Coin List. **[tinyurl.com/numism]**

When you take time to examine a coin, it usually looks perfect. But that's not always the case. The Israel Error Coins site has some interesting blunders, including double strikes, brockages and clipped planchets. But my favourite error can't be blamed on a mechanical breakdown, just some faulty proofreading. It's the Israeli medallion embossed with the English inscription, "SEASONS GREATINGS." **[geocities.com/israelerrorcoins]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

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Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler

Rabbis hone business skills to deal with changing times

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Three Toronto rabbis were among 56 rabbis, executive directors of synagogues, and other Jewish leaders who honed their business skills earlier this month at an intensive, invitation-only, four-day program at Northwestern University's prestigious Kellogg School of Management in Evanston, Ill.

"There has been a general trend over the last 10 years to recognize that rabbis in particular have a need for developing certain skills that are needed for synagogue management, in addition to what has been the traditional skill set – the ability to study and teach Torah; to lead tfillah; to guide, advise and counsel people; and to preside over life-cycle events," Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl of Beth Tzedec Congregation told The CJN.

Certain skills needed for synagogue management

The rabbi is on the advisory board of the newly established program – called Kellogg Management Education for Jewish Leaders – which included sessions on conflict resolution and negotiation skills, marketing and leadership, financial management, crisis management, and fundraising.

Rabbi Michael Dolgin of Temple Sinai Congregation and Rabbi Chaim Strauchler of Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, along with their shul's respective executive directors, as well as Beth Tzedec's executive director, were the other delegates from Canada. Most participants were American, while five were from the United Kingdom. The Reform, Conservative and Orthodox movements were equally represented.

"I think for a long time we had the idea that we don't want to be a business," said Rabbi Frydman-Kohl.

Synagogues are more similar to non-profit than for-profit businesses, but the not-for-profit model is not an exact fit, either, he said.

However, he noted, there are "large swaths of ideas" from the business world that are applicable to synagogue life.

"One of the big differences is that corporations are managed by CEOs and COOs and CFOs, and that determines the direction of the company… The same is true of large not-for-profits, but synagogues are really much more like communities, like small towns or villages, so there are different relationships, and the rabbi or executive director doesn't simply determine the direction, but rather the lay leadership and the membership play a significant role in concert and in dialogue with the religious and professional leadership."

Requests from rabbis led to the development of the program, the school said in a press release. It added that a 2006 survey of Conservative rabbis and lay leaders found that lay leaders want their rabbis to "do more as fundraisers and managers of people."

Rabbi Strauchler, who came to Shaarei Shomayim in August, noted that because of the nature of western society, with its large number of dual-income couples, many organizations don't get the type of volunteer involvement they did a generation ago.

"As people's time is more limited, more of the responsibility falls on the professional staff," he said.

The rabbi – who was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford University in 2001 and has a background in science, English literature and Bible – said there is "certainly a learning curve.

"It's difficult, but I also believe it's rewarding… championing our most essential organizations."

The blindness of the right

By MICHAEL BROWN

Guest Voice

In her op-ed "The wrong-headedness of the left," in The CJN on Nov. 27, Sally Zerker presents readers with a catalogue of the villainy and tyranny of 20th-century dictators, all of them identified as being on the "left."

For a Jew, for any Canadian, her list is astonishing. Adolf Hitler, the greatest villain of all history, certainly of Jewish history, is mentioned only in passing; that the Nazi minions were on the right of the political spectrum is not mentioned at all.

Also drawing a pass from Zerker are Mussolini, Tojo, several centuries of Russian czars, Hungarian, Romanian and Polish fascists of the pre-World War II period and beyond, the neo-Nazis of today's Ukraine, Belarus and elsewhere, South American dictators, and a host of others. Not to mention them is odd from a Jewish standpoint, to say the least, but it would have been inconvenient for the argument. They don't fit the ideology of the essay.

A balanced and fair view of the historical record would note that the traditional anti-Semitism of the right accounts for much of Jews' attraction to the left. The example of Chief Rabbi Dov Berush Meisels of Krakow, impeccably Orthodox and an opponent of modernity, is instructive. Rabbi Meisels was a Polish patriot and a champion of national rights, his traditionalist Judaism notwithstanding. In 1848, he was elected to the democratic Austro-Hungarian Parliament.

At the first session of the Parliament, to the surprise of many, Meisels took his seat with the radicals on the left. When someone tried to direct him to the "right" of the hall, he responded with a pun. "Jews have no right," he said, meaning that with the right, Jews had no rights.

To be sure, many leftist regimes have exacted a communal and religious price from Jews for full membership. Most, however, granted equal rights to Jews and others as individuals. Historically, they have been, at worst, the lesser of two evils.

To be sure, much support for Israel has come most recently from the religious and political right in North America and, to a degree, in Europe. That is a relatively recent phenomenon. Before 1948, it was usually the left, including union members and liberal Protestants, who championed the establishment of a Jewish state. In 1948, the support of U.S. president Harry Truman (a Democrat) was crucial; the State Department (largely conservative diplomats concerned about oil), however, vigorously opposed him. The USSR and its satellites also supported the establishment of the state, for their own reasons, to be sure, and communist Czechoslavakia supplied large quantities of arms to the beleaguered yishuv.

Whether the recent shift to the right of the Jewish community has alienated the left or the anti-Israel rhetoric of the left has sparked the shift to the right is a chicken and egg question. But if we are to learn anything from history, it behooves us to remember that it wasn't always so.

History aside, it seems to me inaccurate, at best, to apply the notions of right and left to the economic situation of the present. "Socialist" has been made into a term of opprobrium by the ideologues of the right. But who are the greater socialists, the major banks and corporations that beg for and receive subsistence allowances from government, or the homeless and the unemployed?

And let us not be deceived. It is not only the present crisis that has brought those corporations cap in hand to Ottawa, Washington, European capitals and even Beijing. That those who seek tax breaks for the rich and prosperous and writeoffs for corporations are seen as devout capitalists, while those who seek tax breaks and other benefits for the less well off are seen as "socialists," is a triumph of obfuscating, ideological spin.

To be sure, the left is not always right, and the right is not always wrong. But our community and the country would be best served by a fair and honest evaluation of both. A careful reading of the past and present might enable us to formulate a reasonable policy for the future.

Michael Brown is professor emeritus at York University.

Feature

Organizations expect delayed fallout

Continued from page 1

To prepare, Maerov said, "We're going over our operating budgets with a fine-tooth comb to see how we can optimize on the revenue side, but equally important, we're looking for every place where we can delay or eliminate an expense so we reduce our potential deficit."

At UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the annual campaign reached $56.6 million by the end of December, "up by roughly $2 million over last year at this time," said spokesperson Howard English. The campaign began in mid-August and closes in February.

Because of the economy, donors are not being asked to up their pledges as in years past. However, many people have increased their gifts, said English. "Not too many" of the 18,600 donors have decreased their pledges, he added.

Federation leaders are in contact with funded agencies to learn about increased community needs, said English. "There is a general recognition that... the requirements for funding will increase, and I think that is motivating the philanthropic behaviour of our donors."

"I think in general we're beginning to see some of the signals," said Richard Cummings, executive director of Jewish Family and Child (JF&C), last month. He had just learned of two clients on the agency's child welfare caseload who were laid off due to the economic downturn, he said.

JF&C's clientele includes individuals, children and families affected by child abuse, woman abuse, and challenged by mental health problems. "An economic downturn increases [their] numbers, increases the symptoms, and challenges our funding and our fundraising in general," said Cummings.

The agency, which is funded by the Ontario government, United Way and UJA Federation, provides counselling and financial assistance to clients living below the poverty line. An estimated 13 per cent of the Jewish community lives in poverty.

JF&C is also a member of the Jewish Poverty Action Group, which is implementing a pilot program to help working poor families become self-sufficient. Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS) Toronto, Kehilla Residential Programme, JVS, Reena and Canadian Jewish Congress are also involved in the project.

"We're working to develop strategies in areas of... affordable housing and social inclusion," said Cummings. "We believe those are significant factors that can shift the circumstances of families."

A safety net for about 110 families – the kosher food bank at the Pride of Israel Synagogue – has also been affected by economic conditions. Last month, funding uncertainty had the service on the brink of imminent closure.

Janis Roth

Its weekly budget is about $700. Synagogue food drives have helped "tremendously," said food-bank chair Alan Marks, but smaller donations are also appreciated. If "a sizable number" of people donated $5 a month, "it would take the pressure off completely."

Janis Roth, executive director of Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS), told The CJN that her agency's greatest concern is that it will take people longer to find jobs and that some people who recently started working will be laid off. Also, she noted, JIAS' clients include younger wage earners supporting their own families as well as senior relatives.

JIAS funding issues are less pressing than they might be, because its annual federation allocation runs until the end of June, Roth said.

The organization's own campaign was scheduled to start last month. "We're just waiting to see what happens," said Roth.

She said the agency is not looking at cutting back programs, but is investigating ways of streamlining.

Seymour Epstein, senior vice-president of UJA Federation, the Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education (the Mercaz), said that Jewish schools are vulnerable to the changing economy in two ways. One is fundraising, and the other is the impact on middle-income parents who may find it "difficult to maintain tuition."

However, he said, he is "generally optimistic" because of the "high level of commitment" to the schools both by parents and the community.

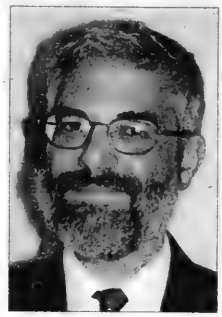
At Associated Hebrew Schools, executive director Arthur Landa said that in November, "a handful" of full-fee-paying parents had applied for tuition assistance. He added that some of those who were already receiving it had inquired about increasing the amount. However, the number is "not significantly different" than in any other year, he said.

Associated has 1,700 students, including the largest number on financial assistance at any Jewish day school in Toronto (about 40 per cent).

Landa said that fundraising challenges will not have any direct impact on students. "It just means the school will likely incur a larger deficit than originally anticipated.

For the past year, Landa noted, school efforts have focused on its centennial and related fundraising. "We have to get back to basics such as our annual campaign and our continuous search for major donors."

He said the "biggest change may be with respect to the middle-class family" who might consider enrolling their children in public school to avoid Associated's $11,500 tuition. Landa estimates the school has "at least a couple of hundred families" who fall into that category.



Rabbi Reuven Tradburks

For many Orthodox families, however, alternatives to Jewish day schools are not seen as a viable option.

The Vaad Harabonim of Toronto, the city's organization of Orthodox rabbis, released a statement last month expressing concern over pressure on Orthodox elementary schools and yeshivas.

"The vast majority of any school's budget is teacher salaries," the statement reads in part. "If a school were unable to meet its payroll, the teachers and the rebbeim would suffer."

The statement emphasized the importance of taking personal responsibility for extending compassion and tzedakah "both to organizations that help those in need, and to our local schools."

Of some two dozen Orthodox schools in the city, the majority do not receive federation funding, said Rabbi Reuven Tradburks, president of the Vaad.

He noted that their teachers, particularly those with large families, would be hard-hit in the area of tuition for their own children.

But there is at least one organization in the Jewish community where the economic downturn might be seen as having a more positive bottom-line impact.

As of late November, State of Israel Bonds Canada had not experienced any adverse effects of the downturn, which hit shortly after many people made annual Bonds pledges on Yom Kippur, said Elan Levitan, vice-president of State of Israel Bonds Canada.

Compared to the stock market, people see the Israeli government-issued bonds as "a safe haven" that has a "flawless" record of repayment dating back to the early 1950s, Levitan said.

"Thus far we appear to be having a business-as-usual year."

Correction

In the article "Chanukah desserts to please kids of any age" (CJN Dec. 11), the chocolate shortbread recipe should have used 3/4 cup flour. The CJN regrets the error.

CAMP RAMAH מחנה רמה

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Musicians in a hot band find life chaotic, gruelling and fun

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

When high school buddies Mike Kirsh and Mike Wise used to play gigs at Toronto-area Indigo bookstores, they had no idea that years later, they'd be touring as part of one of Canada's hottest bands.

Bassist Kirsh and guitarist Wise, both 23, make up the Jewish half of the Midway State, a pop-rock band that is forcing music lovers to perk up their ears and pay attention to four young boys who have developed a sound that's often compared to music industry giants such as Coldplay and Keane.

Guitarist Mike Wise

Originally from Collingwood, Ont., lead singer, songwriter and pianist Nathan Ferraro formed the band in 2002, with his best friend, Daenen Bramberger, the drummer; Ryan Horning on guitar; and Adam Beamish on bass.

After about three years of touring and songwriting, Midway State caught the attention of Juno Award-winning producer Gavin Brown, known for his work with artists Billy Talent and Three Days Grace.

Horning and Beamish were fired from the band, and Ferraro and Bramberger decided to post an ad at the University of Toronto in hopes of finding musicians who could contribute to the sound they were striving for.

"I was going to school at U of T, and I was studying music at the time. I joined the band and shortly after they needed a bass player. I was friends with Mike and I used to play with him, so as soon as he moved back to Toronto, when he finished school at [the University of Western Ontario], he joined the band," Wise said.

Bassist Mike Kirsh

Kirsh said, "I was at Western getting a BA, like all Jewish kids do," adding that at that point he didn't know what career path he wanted to take.

"I was taking media information. I don't know what I was thinking," he said with a laugh.

Three years later, Wise and Kirsh are part of a band that has toured across North America, opening for acts such as Avril Lavigne, Theory of a Deadman, Evanescence, and Collective Soul.

"When we first started touring, we were both new as a group of guys and a band, and we sort of felt like four guys thrown together into a band, because we didn't really know each other," Wise said.

"By touring, we really quickly bonded and before we knew it we were dressing the same and speaking the same and we became best friends really quickly."

While there were aspects of touring that would fit the stereotypical rock star cliches – the drinking, the partying, and the girls – Wise said that there's another side of touring that isn't nearly as glamorous.

"There is also the non-exciting part that you wouldn't think of, like loading your gear and waking up in the morning to do interviews," he said.

Kirsh said, "It's chaotic. But it's a good kind of chaotic. You just have to let it happen."

Since then, the band's popularity has been gaining momentum. In 2007, one of their songs, Unaware, was played during the final minutes of a hit TV show, The O.C., and their current single, Never Again, spent more than 15 weeks on the MuchMusic countdown – hitting the No. 1 spot in November.

"We got to open for a band called Evanescence in Paris last spring in this stadium of like, 10,000 people. And we were really well received and I think it was our first really big show like that, so it was a lot of fun," Wise said.

Kirsh added, "We had no idea what to expect, and we were really happy with the response. I mean, we were halfway around the world and they were totally getting it, so that was awesome."

Despite their success, both Kirsh and Wise are grounded and don't take their good fortune for granted.

"We all work extremely hard, you know. We're in the studio every day, six days a week, 10 hours a day for months. It was gruelling but a lot of fun, and the final product is really rewarding for me," Kirsh said, referring to the production of Holes, Midway State's debut album, which was released in 2008.

Wise said, "We strive to have a modern sound but also to have original songwriting elements there," adding that Ferraro, who writes most of their songs, is also influenced by older songwriters such as Carol King, Peter Gabriel and Neil Young.

Despite the fact that music was always a big part of their lives, neither of them could have predicted they'd land careers as rock musicians.

"I always wanted to be in a band and what-not, but for me it was a struggle figuring out if I wanted to pursue a career in music. I guess I kind of slowly fell into it," Wise said.

"It was always a dream for me, but it wasn't the only thing I thought I could do. Had I sucked at everything else, maybe it would have been more clear. But I felt like I had other avenues I could go down. It wasn't the clearest decision for me when I was younger, but now, it's super cool."

From left, Wise, lead singer Nathan Ferraro, drummer Daenen Bramberger and Kirsh.

Kirsh added: "I always thought it would be so great because it's what I love to do the most."

The boys, both graduates of Thornhill Secondary School, spoke about the tight-knit Jewish community that they're part of and the support they've received from many of their Jewish peers.

"It's kind of cool because the non-Jewish half of our band is always amazed at how much our Jewish friends want to help out in any way they can," Wise said.

Although the boys say that they're having the time of their lives, their busy schedule doesn't leave them much time for a social life.

"It's a bit weird with the touring schedule, being on and off the road at different times, coming back to your friends and leaving them for a few months, and their world goes on," Kirsh said.

Wise added, "Also, our schedule is super volatile. We might be home one day, and then we find out in two days that we're going to the States for a month to tour. So things come up at the last minute for us, and because we're all so committed, we have to make ourselves available all the time.

"It can make us flaky. You cancel things and you can't commit to things, and you can't plan trips three months from now because of it. But I'm fine with that because I want to be doing this... But to any of my friends who are reading this article, I apologize for cancelling on you for anything."

Kirsh said, trailing off, laughing, "And to any of my girlfriends..."

They're currently enjoying some time off, but they are getting set to release and promote their newest single and music video called Change For You.

For more information about the band and upcoming tour dates, visit www.themidwaystate.com or www.myspace.com/themidwaystate.

Liberal's coalition negotiator speaks out

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The Bloc Québécois were prepared to keep a Liberal-led coalition government alive for two years, if the coalition allowed Bill 101 to apply to federally regulated companies in Quebec.

But Marlene Jennings, the veteran Liberal MP in charge of negotiating the coalition deal for the Liberals, said "no way" to the Bloc.

The proposed change to the province's French language law would have allowed employees of federally regulated companies, including post offices and banks, to conduct business in French only.

"I said no. Never. Not while I have a breath in my body," Jennings told a recent breakfast gathering at Shaare Zedek Congregation.

And the result, said the 11-year Notre-Dame-de-Grâce–Lachine MP, was that the Liberals settled for the Bloc pledging to prop up the Liberal-NDP coalition during confidence votes for 18 months, not two years.

The coalition agreement to govern was formed because the Liberals, the New Democratic Party and the Bloc opposed the Conservative's government November economic update. A confidence vote to oust the Conservatives was to take place in early December.

Jennings, the deputy House leader for the official Opposition, was the negotiator of the proposed coalition during a frantic weekend in early December, because Ralph Goodale, the Liberal Opposition's House leader, was out of town for the weekend.

The whole coalition issue, however, became moot – at least temporarily – after Governor General Michaëlle Jean agreed to Prime Minister Stephen Harper's request to have his threatened Conservative minority government suspended – or prorogued – until the House reconvenes Jan. 26 for the throne speech.

For Jennings, 57, the idea of having Bill 101 apply to federal institutions in Quebec was unacceptable.

"I was able to [say no] because I knew that for people in my riding, and English-speaking communities, and the Jewish community, and other communities, Bill 101 is anathema… for a variety of reasons," she said.

"So I felt I had your support – that you had my back – to make sure that nothing went into those agreements… that would be detrimental to our communities."

Another coup, she said, was that the Bloc agreed, in writing, to take sovereignty off its agenda for the 18-month period, which was deemed long enough to see if the economic stimulus program the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc proposed was working.

"I'm quite proud of it," Jennings said, "because it's the first time in the 18 years [since] the Bloc was first founded, that the Bloc, in writing, took sovereignty off its agenda, if the agreement was put into action.

"No other party, no other government has been able to do that."

Marlene Jennings, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce–Lachine member of Parliament

Several times Jennings adamantly denied there was a "coalition" at all.

"There is no coalition," she said. "None, regardless of what Mr. Harper and ministers of his government are saying…

"The governance agreement only would have become operative had the Governor General asked the leader of the official Opposition to see if it could form an alternative government."

And that didn't happen.

She said there were, in fact, two agreements she negotiated: a "governance agreement" hammered out with NDP leader Jack Layton that would make the Liberal leader prime minister, and a separate "policy agreement" with the NDP and Bloc on an economic stimulus package that included the Bloc's commitment not to defeat the Liberal-led government for 18 months.

Jennings said the Bloc did not take part in the governance negotiations.

Instead of the word "coalition," Jennings said she preferred the term "co-operative government" to describe the deal with the NDP, contingent on Bloc support. If the coalition government ever came into power, Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff would become prime minister and preserve "his authority and prerogatives," including cabinet appointments – six of them from the NDP.

However, Jennings said if Harper tables a budget on Jan. 27 that is acceptable to the Liberals in providing appropriate economic stimulus, they would vote in favour of it and keep the Conservative government alive.

Jennings said the fact that the NDP and Bloc have already stated that they would vote against the Jan. 27 budget regardless of what it says is why they "are not fit to form a government.

"How do you condemn something you have not even seen?"

Jennings said that Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe "did not come happily" into the policy agreement but did so because he was "pushed by the unions," his support base in Quebec. Similarly, the NDP, she said, was "pushed by the unions" outside Quebec.

Regarding Liberal leader Stéphane Dion's infamous botched videotape – considered by many as Dion's coup de grâce as Liberal leader – she said that Dion rewrote his speech, which was in response to Harper's address to the nation about the political crisis, and kept the video crew from entering his office until close to air time. A broken "focus" button on the camera also contributed to the delay in getting the videotape out.

Ancestry.com gets new material

Continued from page 12

Ancestry's huge variety of 26,000 data bases – census lists, border crossings, passenger manifests, newspaper obituaries and similar material, ad infinitum – was already the most powerful assortment of genealogical tools on the planet. With the added Jewishgen lists, Ancestry now overshadows Jewishgen as the premier site for Jewish genealogy on the internet.

The site features an introductory essay titled "Where Do I Begin?" by the well-known genealogical publisher Gary Mokotoff. The first step is to record everything you already know about your family, then speak to relatives and others with information about your family.

Mokotoff advises researchers to make full use of Ancestry.com but also to visit Jewishgen.org to use additional important data bases found only there. Two examples are the Jewishgen Family Finder (JGFF), which offers a list of family names and ancestral towns being researched by some 80,000 genealogists worldwide, and the Family Tree of the Jewish People, a data base of more than 2.5 million people.

Mokotoff also suggests becoming involved with a local Jewish genealogical society such as the Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto (www.jgstoronto.ca).

Try out Ancestry's Jewish Family History Collection by visiting www.ancestry.ca/jewishfamilyhistory. For further information, call 800-958-9049.

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YIDDISH CORNER

Edited by: ALEK SILVER

ייִדיש־ווינקל

רעדאַגירט פֿון: אַלעק סילווער

דאָס נייַע יאָר 2009 איז דאָ

פֿון אַלעק סילווער

איך וויל נישט אויב די צייטונג וועט אַנקומען צו אייך פֿאַר די ניי־יאָר פֿייערונגען אַדער נאָך זיי. אָבער ווי עס זאָל נישט זיין, וועט איר לייענען די צייטונג אין דעם נייעם יאָר. נו וויל איך איר וינטשן אַ גליקלעך אַרן פֿרילעך יאָר צוזאַמען מיט אייער פֿאַמיליע, מיט כלל ישראל, מיט דער גאַנצער וועלט.

איך וועל אַנהייבן מיט די זעלבע וועריטער, וואָס איך האָב אַנגעהויבן אין די לעצטע יאָרן: פֿאַרגעסט נישט צו שרייבן א "9" וווּ איר האָט בית איצט געשריבן אַן "8", אויב נישט וועלן אייערע דאָקומענטן נישט זיין כשר.

וועגן צווייי יידן טרעפן זיך אין אַ געשעפט, גייט דער געשפּרעך מער־וויניק אַזוי: דער עלטערער יוד פֿרעגט: "וואָס הערט זיך?" דער צווייטער יוד ענטפֿערט: "גאָרנישט קיין נייעס". אַן עלטערער געשפּרעך גייט אַן וועגן צווייי יידן טרעפן זיך אין שיל. אָבער דאָס איז נישט אמת. דער צווייטער יוד האָט שוין גאָר א קך נייעס. ער וואָלט נערן געוואָלט רעדן וועגן זיך, וועגן זיין משפּחה אַרן וועגן זיינע מעדיצינען אַרן דאָקטוירים. ער וואָלט אַריך געוואָלט רעדן א ביסל פֿאָליטיק, נאָבן זיין מיינונג. איר וויסט דאָך: צווייי יידן — דריי מיינונגען.

אָבער כדי נישט צו פֿאַרלירן קיין צייט, קומט מען אַן מיט בלויז דריי וועריטער, אַרן שוין.

וואָלט געווען נייגעריק צו הערן וויי עס איז צוגעגאַנגען דער געשפּרעך, וועגן דאָס נייע יאָר האָט געטראָפֿן דאָס אלטע. דאָ קען מען שוין נישט אַנקומען מיט בלויז דריי וועריטער. עס איז שוין דאָ א קך מער נייעס, ווי „גאָרנישט". פֿאַר מיר איז נאָר א שאָד, וואָס עס איז נישט געווען קיין קך גוטע נייעס צו קענען מיטנעמען מיט זיך אין זכרון אינעם נייעם יאָר. עס וועט זיכער זיין שווער אויסצורעכענען אויף די פינגער פֿון איין האַנט בעשעענישן, וואָס האָבן אויפגעהייטערט די נשמה פֿון מענטש אין אַלטן יאָר.

בלויז איין שיינע בעשעענישן איז געבליבן ביי מיר אין זכרון: די פֿייַערונגען פֿון 60־יאָריקער עקזיסטענץ פֿון מדינת ישראל. חוץ דעם איז דאָס יאָר 2008 געגאַנגען ווי די פֿריערדיקע יאָרן אויך אין געווען פֿול מיט צרות, ליידן, קאַטאַסטראָפֿעס אויך קרבנות. געווען גרויסע פֿייערן אויך וואָסער אויסגליקן, וווּ עס זיינען אופֿגעקומען טויזנטער מענטשן אויך פֿאַראורזאַכט גרויסע פֿערוועלטיקע שאַדנס.

איך וויייס, אַז מיר האָבן געוואָס צוויי וויכטיקע וואַלן: ביי אונדז אין קאַנאַדע אויך אין די פֿאַראייניקטע שטאַטן. (וועגן דעם וועלן מיר שרייבן אין קומענדיקע וויינקלען). דערצו נאָך וועלן צוגעגרייט נייע וואַלן אין מדינת ישראל, וואָס איז זיכער נישט צום הערצן די איינוווינער פון דער מדינה אויך פון עם ישראל איבער דער וועלט. עס זיינען אויך בעווען וואַלן אין ירושלים, וווּ א סעקולאַר פֿערזאָן איז דערוויילט געוואָרן ווי דער ראש העיר.

ערשט כמעט צום סוף פון יאָר האָבן פֿאַסירט צוויי גרויסע בעשעענישן, וואָס האָבן אויפגערופֿען די גאַנצע וועלט. צום ערשטן איז בעקומען די עקאַנאָמיע־קראַקייט", וואָס האָט אויפגעשידערט די גאַנצע וועלט. די פינאַנציעלע אויך מאַנעטאַרע אינסטיטוציעס זיינען געגאַנגען באַקראָט. עס האָט פֿשוט אויסגעפעלט געלט אויף דער וועלט. די דריי גרויסע אויטאָ־פאַבריקן האָבן נישט בעווען געווג געלט צו באַצאָלן דעם בעוואָלט פון די אַרבעטער אויך בעמחוט אָפּוואַרן טויזנטער אַרבעטער פון זייערע אַרבעטס־פלעצער.

(סוף אין קומענדיקן וויינקל)

Coast to Coast

Winnipeg Jewish Post gets new editor

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Freelance journalist and CJN contributor Rhonda Spivak said that she is excited about assuming her new position as editor of Winnipeg's Jewish Post and News.

"I am looking forward to creating a more dynamic product that will engage readers and help sustain the vibrancy of our community," she said.

Spivak is replacing Matt Bellan, longtime editor and co-owner of the biweekly newspaper, who retired in early December and is selling his share to his brother and partner, Bernie.

The paper had been a weekly until about a year ago, but the brothers decided to print every second week as a result of declining advertising sales.

Bellan said that the paper is doing much better financially and that advertising has picked up over the last year.

He added that he feels relieved to be free of the responsibility of editing the paper after 27 years on the job.

The Post was founded in 1925, and Matt – he had been working there as editor since 1981– Bernie and a third partner, who has been out of the picture for quite some time, bought it in 1984.

In 1987, the partners bought out the Western Jewish News, a longtime competitor of the Post, and merged the two papers into the Jewish Post and News.

Matt Bellan said that when he began working as editor, the Jewish Post was a 12-page publication that served largely as a community bulletin board promoting upcoming events.

"I am proud that I have been able to enlarge the paper and provide more serious news reporting of community issues," he said.

He also takes pride in going to bat for the underdog, particularly a blind social worker who was let go from her employment by a local Jewish social service agency, and an Israeli man involved in a child custody case who was banned from several Jewish institutions because, Bellan believes, his former in-laws are prominent members of the community.

Rhonda Spivak

He also points out that he was the first editor of a Jewish newspaper in North America to openly proclaim that he is gay.

As sole owner, Bernie Bellan, who is also the paper's business manager, said that he is looking to change the focus of the paper by placing more emphasis on local coverage and trying to appeal to a broader segment of the community.

"We are fortunate to have Rhonda as our new editor. She brings with her strong writing and analytical skills and understands the Israeli scene as well or better than any other Canadian Jewish journalist," he said.

Spivak is a native Winnipegger whose connections with Israel go back to 1986 when she attended the Rothberg School for Overseas students at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

A lawyer by training, she is also a member of the Israeli Bar, having articled at the Jerusalem office of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel.

She speaks Hebrew fluently and visits Israel often, where she and her family – she is married to Stephen Corne and they have two children, Leah, 10, and Dov, 9 – have a second home in Netanya.

After staying at home to raise her two children, Spivak began writing as a freelance journalist about two years ago. "I always had a flare for writing," she said.

Her articles have appeared in the Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz (the English edition), the Winnipeg Free Press, the Vancouver Jewish Independent, the Vancouver Sun, the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin and the Minneapolis American Jewish World, as well as the Jewish Post and News and The CJN.

Her articles have also been distributed widely in the Jewish world by news services on the web, including Israel News, Israel Jewish News, Israpundit, JHeadlines, and Jewish World.

In 2007, Spivak was nominated by the Vancouver Jewish Independent for an award among Jewish journalists in North America, for her coverage of the case of Sam Golubchuk and issues surrounding decisions to terminate his life.

Rights complaint against imam rejected

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The Canadian Human Rights Commission won't investigate a complaint against a Montreal imam who allegedly wrote disparagingly, and sometimes with violent intent, about Jews, Christians and other "infidels," as well as homosexuals, women and democracy in general.

The complaint was lodged in April by Marc Lebuis, publisher of a Quebec-base website Point de Bascule (Tipping Point), which aims to raise awareness of what its creators perceive as the threat to western values posed by radical Islam.

Lebuis claimed Abou Hammaad Sulaiman Dameus Al-Hayit disseminated hate propaganda in his book L'Islam ou l'Intégrisme? A la lumière du Qor'an et de la Sounnah (Islam or Fundamentalism? In light of the Qur'an and the Sunna) in the book's third edition, which was published in 2006-07 on the Internet.

The commission found that the writings are not likely to expose members of any identifiable group to hatred or contempt, according to the law.

Among the book excerpts Lebuis cited was that Jews "spread corruption and chaos on Earth," and "unjustly occupy" Palestine for the sole purpose of "filling this land with corruption and transgress the laws of Allah in the name of secularism."

As well, Lebuis alleges the imam wrote that most Jews "seek only material goods and money. Apart from that, they have nothing."

Christianity, according to Lebuis' excerpts, is the reason the West is "full of perversity, corruption and adultery."

Other excerpts state that all "infidels" are "evil… love perversity and "are our enemies," and that Muslims are better than others.

Elsewhere, the imam wrote that democracy is contrary to Islam and that Muslims should overthrow "infidel" rulers whenever they are strong enough to do so.

In an Islamic state, Jews and Christians would keep their religion but pay a fee called the jizyah. "The purpose of the jizyah is to humiliate and punish infidels to encourage them to accept Islam," Lebuis quotes from the book. Those of other faiths or atheists must accept Islam or "be killed."

The author also calls for the extermination of homosexuals.

Commission representative Stéphane Brisson wrote to Lebuis in December that "the majority of the references in [the book] are to 'infidels,' 'miscreants' or 'western women.' These are general, broad and diversified categories that do no constitute an 'identifiable group' under Section 13 of the [Canadian Human Rights] Act."

In the instances where groups that are specifically protected against discrimination are identified, such as homosexuals, Christians and Jews, Brisson writes they "do not seem to promote 'hatred' or 'contempt' according to the criteria set forth in the Taylor case."

Lebuis acknowledged that the purpose of his complaint was to "test the objectivity" of the commission.

Sunnybrook launches cancer program for young women

'Worse prognosis than older women'

By LEILA SPEISMAN
Staff Reporter

PYNK, a program launched recently at Sunnybrook's Odette Cancer Centre, aims to provide help and support to young women battling breast cancer.

The name "PYNK" combines pink, the colour associated with breast cancer, with a "y" that stands for young women.

Sunnybrook medical oncologist and University of Toronto associate professor of medicine Dr. Ellen Warner founded the program, together with several young breast cancer survivors and Dr. Judith Weinroth. Weinroth, a general practitioner in oncology, serves as the program's director.

Warner noted that while people tend to consider breast cancer a disease of older women, a significant number of women under the age of 40 develop it. Statistics from a Sunnybrook media release say that of an estimated 8,500 women diagnosed with breast cancer annually, five to 10 per cent of them are women under 40.

"Israeli researchers have shown, and I have seen, too, that young women have a worse time, and have a worse prognosis than older women" Warner said.

Besides the purely medical difficulties, she said, the psychological and social issues around breast cancer in young women is dramatic. Ten years after being diagnosed, she said, women still have difficulty because of the drugs and the treatment, including body image, infertility and weight gain.

"It can destroy marriages, educational opportunities, careers," Warner said.

Tumours in older women tend to be discovered by regular screenings. "But the tumour has to be big enough to be seen on ultrasounds, and young women's may grow too fast for this to be much good," she said.

Symptoms such as lumps (often painless), a clear or bloody discharge from the nipple, or changes in the size, shape or skin of the breast are often ignored in young women, especially if they were recently pregnant or are nursing, she said. This is because pregnancy and nursing can cause many of the same conditions. A delay in diagnosis could have serious consequences, Warner cautioned.

Even when older and younger women were matched stage by stage, younger women do much worse. "We want to figure out why," she said.

Young women diagnosed with breast cancer who join the PYNK program have a first meeting with a nurse and the program co-ordinator. The women are offered support, comfort and information, and then are referred to a surgeon or oncologist. "We can fast-track them," Warner said.

The nurse guides the women through the cancer-treatment system, explaining what is happening, sending them to whatever specialists are best for their particular situation, co-ordinating treatments and hooking them up to support groups.

For young women, fertility can be a major concern. Has she had any children yet? Is her family complete? Will the treatment cause infertility? If she needs surgery, will she still be attractive to her spouse? These are some of their concerns.

The issue is complicated if a woman carries the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation, a mutation primarily found in Ashkenazi Jewish women, that makes her more prone to breast and ovarian cancer, Warner pointed out.

Weinroth follows up with the women in the program. The program also offers information for the patient's family, as well as access to support groups.

PYNK is supported through fundraising and donations.

For more information, visit the Sunnybrook website, www.sunnybrook.ca, or call the program co-ordinator at 416-480-5000, ext. 1059.

Winnipeg centenarian celebrates his 105th birthday

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Sam Baker has to wear hearing aids now and his knees are bothering him, but he is not complaining.

"I'm as healthy as a horse," said Baker, who celebrated his 105th birthday with family on Dec. 19.

His son, Steven, credits his father's longevity to a lot of walking. "Dad walked 1 1/2 miles a day until he was 95 or 96 and developed some back trouble. I remember one time when he was in his late 70s, he went for a walk and got caught in a thunderstorm. He called for a ride home. He had walked three miles."

Sitting in the concourse at the Asper Jewish Community Centre prior to joining in the regular Tuesday Stay Young Seniors program, Baker greets well-wishers who stop to say hello.

Sam Baker
[Myron Love photo]

Talking about himself, he said that he was born in Poland, the fifth son of Joe and Zlata Baker. The family came to Winnipeg in 1906, and two sisters were born there.

Baker grew up in West Kildonan in NorthWinnipeg. He attended local public schools until the age of 12, when he left school to work in his father's tannery.

In the 1930s, he was involved in various business ventures in rural Saskatchewan with his brothers. In 1942, he bought Jo-Ann Shop, a lingerie store in Brandon, Man., which he converted into a ladies' apparel shop. He later opened a second women's apparel store, Joy's Frocks, in Yorkton, Sask.

Those were busy times, he said. "I would often work 12-hour days. I would come home for supper then go back to the store to do some bookkeeping."

In 1971, he moved his wife, Joan – they were married 62 years before she died in 2002 – and their three children to Winnipeg. He continued to run his store in Brandon, and came home to Winnipeg on the weekends, before he retired in the mid-1980s.

Currently, Baker lives in a condo with his son. He attends services at the Shaarey Zedek Synagogue and participates in the Stay Young and Gwen Secter seniors programs.

"I don't go out much in the evenings," he said. "I watch television and read the papers."

He gave up driving six years ago. "That was hard. It was like losing my right hand."

Up until last year, he was still travelling to visit his daughters, Michelle and Janice respectively, in Hamilton and Calgary. "I am finished travelling," he said. "My daughters and grandchildren" – he has grandsons in Dallas, Tex. and Toronto, and four great grandchildren – "will have to come here to see me."

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חדשה בקנדה

נינה שנהב

אני חולפת על פני הסלון בדרכי למטבח. שני ילדי בחדים בשלוויה. מוסיקת קריסטמס ברקע מהמכשיר. ואני מתחילה לזמזם. כבר לפי הזמזם, נכנסת התמונה למטבח ויוצרת בי. "אמא." היא אומרת. "אתמי גם רוצים עץ." אז שלה נכנס אף הוא בדרכים למטבח. ומתנן. אני דחופת לפה עוגיה שוקולד, ושלוחת אותם לעשות שיעורים. "הילדים ביקשו עץ חג מולד." אני כבשרת למאיר בערב. מאיר נועץ בי מבט. "אין סיכוי. אני לא מתכוון לחזור מחנוכה מבית הכנסת. לבית שבר ניצב עץ חג מולד מסנוור." "בדיק." אני מגיבה. "ספונני ככל שיהיה, עם כל הירושלים האלה." אני מוסיפה. "האחרית הבכבנצים." בינתיים מאיר. "ובובות המלאכים הבוהקות האלה." "ו אני. "והבובות היפות שבוחמות לתן מתחתיו..." אומתי משתעלים בבבוכה. "תראה. לא אמני לעבדה כדי לחסות את מנהגי הגרים." אני אומרת בתבוכה. "עץ לא יעמוד לבי כאן באמצע הסלון."

"גם לא בפינה הנוראית ליד החלון, כך שהמבוכה בדיוק תאיר עליו באופן תגיגי..." מוסיף מאיר. "הם נראה מלבאים בכל הילדים." אני אומתי. "הם אומרים שלכולם קמנים עץ." מאיר מכבה את מנורת הלילה שלו. "טוב, בבוקר לפנות אותב, ובגדול." נוכמם.

למחרת, אומתי כבר מבעוין הזמזמה. כולל עבר קורצים לבי עצי אשוח מפוארים על שלל כדורי הזכוכית הצבעוניים והמבוה הקלאסים החוחרים. "זה מירוח מה שהדלך פה." אני בפלילה כשאני בחנה את תנית המחיר של בובת ברבי קמנה. "אין הם מצפים פה בחגדה. שמתגרים וחדשים בלי גרוש על הבמכה יתגבו קריסטמס כראוי?"

מאיר מבינו בי בבבנו ביבו. "להזכיר, מתגרים אמללים בלי גרוש מישראל, מעולם לא יתגבו, ובמחיתי גם לא יתגבו קריסטמס." אני נכיחה בחזרה את הברבי, אלא שהיא מוצאת את דרכה לפלילה שלי בחזרה. "בן, זה בשביל הנכה." נוענן מאיר ומיסיף, "תבני לה גם ברבי יהיה. היא אוהבת." אחרי שנענדרים לארוז לה שתי ברבות, קן אחד (אומתי משמחה ליבריליו), שלוש תינוקות ובית ברבי מפוארי, אומתי בדרכינו לקבין נוסף. "הילד אוהב משקפות, מצלמות ומשחקי מחשב." אני מוסיף. "חייבים להחליט על פריט אחד. הוא יבין, הוא כבר גדול. עוד מעט אולי אנא הבוא עבודה, ויהיה לו יותר." מאיר ואני מתוכחים בחנות העמקות. הוא טוען- משקפות, אני- מצלמה. המוכרת באה לחרשינו, וממליצה בחים- גם וגם. "אחרי הכל, זה קריסטמס!" היא מסבירה בעניין. "אומתי לא יוענים קריסטמס." לחוש מאיר, ובדים להלם כללי מחנות העמקות. שמשתוקק באותו. המוכרת בחנות ומצרת ואפבירנית, קובעת הוראת "חנוכה שמח!" רק בגלל זה אומתי לוקחים גם שבעה משחקי מחשב וגם חמישה סרטים.

אחרי ארבעה ימים מפרכים בשלל קניונים, נראה לנו שהי פיצינו את הילדים במחנת חנוכה עץ. "בישראל הרבה יותר טל." אני מוסיפה לחבריתי, תמר, בשלשן. "מחמכה, נתנו כמה שקלים ליולד, אנחים, לביבת תפוחי אדמה וצי שרוסה, ואם היה לו באמת מזל, סופגניה במילוי איכותי." תמר מסכימה ומוסיפה, "מה זה כל השוענן הזה עם העצים והמתנות? אומתי עם הרבה יותר חכם. מבקשים גלם, כסף, הכי פרקטי." "יהילדים שלך לא הורגים אותך על זה שלכולם יש עץ בסלון ולכם אין?" אני מבחיה. "תראי," כך תמר, "בסוף קניני להם עץ. את יודעת, לא רציני לשבור להם את הלב." אני שוחאת את תמר.

יומיים לפני ערב קריסטמס, נר שני בחנוכיה, אומתי מתעירים לעבר הילדים את שלל המתנות. הם פותחים בציפיה מתוכנו. מתנה אחת אחרי השניה, עד האחרונה שבהן, ומידים לנו בימוס קידוי. אני לא מסוגלת להתאפק. "מה יש?!" אני צועקת. "למה המבנו הגאוכוס הזה? לא קיבלתם מספיק?!" הילדים מתבוננים בי בשקט. "רציני עץ..." אומר הילד לבסוף. "אין עץ, לא היה עץ, ולא יהיה עץ!" צועק מאיר בחימה. "אני לא מתכוון לחנוג את הולדתי של ישו הנוצרי! הנוצרים עשו מספיק צלב, דיבו ומבזו אותו!" אני מנסה להרגיע את מאיר, הקטנה פורצת בבכי. "אמא." היא אומרת מבין הזמעות, "לא ידעתי שבגלל עץ הפרים יפני רצחו את ההורים..."

עץ הפרים? יפני?

"על מה את מדברת?" אני שואלת בספק. הבן שלי מביט בי בצער, ומסביר: "רציני עץ הפרים יפני, מיצאמרי, לחבסה. מה שמראים כל הזמן בפרסומות בטלוויזיה. זה מגיע עם צעץ קטן, אדמה, כמה זרעים דשנן, ואחרי כמה שבועות הוא גדל. לכולם יש עץ מה. הייתי בטוחה שקיבנו גם לנו, לחנוכה.

אפילו אמרנו לכם, אבל כנראה לא הקשבתם..."

לתגובות באנגלית או בעברית: nina.shenhav@gmail.com

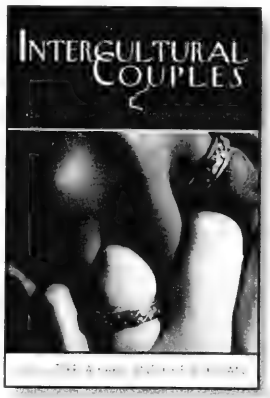
On Campus

Traditions can survive in inter-cultural marriage: prof

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Not only are interfaith and inter-cultural marriages becoming more commonplace in Canada, but they are also becoming more socially acceptable, said Kyle Killian, co-editor of a new book about inter-cultural couples.

The book, Intercultural Couples: Exploring Diversity in Intimate Relationships, examines relationships that involve partners crossing national, racial, ethnic and religious borders.



"In terms of who's out there to meet and marry, one in five Canadians are immigrants, and one in six Canadians are visible minorities, so it's much more likely now that a relationship is going to be a cross-cultural situation," said Killian, who is an associate professor at York University's faculty of health.

He said that studies available from the 1980s and '90s often suggested that interfaith and inter-cultural couples had a higher divorce rate, so he and his co-editor, Terri Karis, wanted to update the data that was available.

"The research that was out there kind of parallelled society's negativity and hostility towards inter-cultural relationships and inter-cultural marriages, in that it tended to make a lot of negative predictions about the couples. It tended to focus on instability and divorce, and it tended to be rather problem saturated," Killian said.

While Killian found that more recent data suggest that there isn't necessarily a greater possibility of separation or divorce within inter-cultural marriages, he did acknowledge that problems can arise if couples and their families can't compromise when it comes to cultural practices and ceremonies such as weddings.

He said that the second chapter of his book focuses on a Jewish woman who married out of her faith and examined the ways in which the couple struggled to plan a wedding that reflected their cultures in a modern, inclusive way.

For example, they decided to put a modern twist on the tradition of breaking a glass under the chupah by having both the bride and the groom step on the glass together.

He said that what sometimes happens is that an interfaith couple will decide to keep religion and culture out of a wedding entirely, or will choose to focus on one culture rather than try to incorporate both.

"Sometimes, they'll highlight neither, throw the baby out with the bath water and just elope, or have a courthouse ceremony, or maybe just switch to a mainstream, generic ceremony, something you'd see on TV," he said.

"The only trouble with all these solutions is that quite frequently, they are not successful in that one or both sides of the family is not entirely pleased with the resulting ceremony, and if they decide not to have a ceremony at all, a lot of people are going to be upset."

Although Killian was optimistic about the idea that interfaith and intercultural marriages can succeed as often as same-faith marriages do, he understands the concern associated with Jewish intermarriage.

"I'm a family therapist, so I do hear concerns of that kind. I can certainly understand that over the last few centuries and beyond, why people would be expressing concern," he said. "I can see why they would be worried about how individual choices might affect the preserving of the group."

Killian said that the rise in interfaith marriages may have something to do with a trend toward increasing secularism.

"We're not quite as religiously oriented as we might have been a generation ago… That brings up questions about someone who identifies as Jewish in more of a secular way, a cultural way, [and whether] that's going to cut the muster for someone who is more in keeping with religious tradition."

On the other hand, he said, some of the studies based on the population in the Greater Toronto Area that he came across suggest that, particularly in ethnic communities, younger generations are still identifying with the culture of their ancestors.

"They might be getting back to their roots, so to speak," Killian said.

"I think there is room for people to still primarily identify with the cultural beliefs and values that their parents and grandparents brought with them to Canada. I don't think there is any danger of it just evaporating."

In the case of the Jewish woman who intermarried, Killian said that the fact that it was important for her to include Jewish tradition in the ceremony demonstrates that it is likely she will want to include tradition in other aspects of her life, as well, if she chooses to have children.

"If one person is much more religious than the other, it is likely that that particular religious identity will be imparted to the children," he said.

HERITAGE PROJECT: Aleeza Muskat, left, and Rachel Keslassy, Grade 4 students at Associated Hebrew Schools' Kamin Education Centre in Thornhill, show off their recently completed project on collective memory, in which students researched family heirlooms and created presentations on their importance to themselves, their family and future generations.

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Mazel tov and happy birthday to Freda Slotnick on her 90th birthday. With much love from family and friends.

Mazel tov to Rose Wexler on her 96th birthday. Love, Allan, Ora and Adam.

Mazel tov to Eddie Rotman & Marilyn Albom on their marriage Nov. 16. Much love and best wishes from family and friends.

Amy, Michael, Raegan and Taylor Wine announce the birth of Jacob. Delighted are Bubbie Devah & Zaidie Shep Wine. Missed are Bubbie Shirley & Zaidie Issie Shniffer.

As featured on
onlysimchas!
Celebrating Jewish Life
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Mazel tov on the recent engagement of Josh Hertz & Stacey Inch.

Mazel tov on the recent bar mitzvah of Shlomo Spigelman in Chevron, Israel.

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What's New deadlines: Monday, Jan. 12, is the deadline for the Jan. 22 issue and Monday, Jan. 19, is the deadline for the Jan. 29 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Sunday, Jan. 4

KLEZMER CONCERT

Enjoy a klezmer concert at the Betel Centre. 7 p.m. $8. Tickets, 905-763-7890 or at the door.

Tuesday, Jan. 6

LONDON LUNCH & LEARN

Join Temple Israel of London for lunch and learn. Bring a lunch, desserts, coffee and tea provided. 519-858-4400

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY

Beth Tikvah Synagogue offers an eight-week Tuesday afternoon movie series moderated by **Larry Anklewicz**, program co-ordinator of the Toronto Jewish Film Festival. Tuesdays through Feb 24, 2 p.m. Today, the Hungarian film Gloomy Sunday. $5 per person per movie. 416-221-3433

TEHILLIM WITH A TWIST

Women are invited to join this series with **Devora Chana Weisswasser**, Tuesdays 7:30 p.m. through Feb. 10 at Shaarei Tefillah. Register, 416-787-1631.

Other News

YIDDISH VINKL

Join the Yiddish Vinkl Thursday, Jan. 8, 12:15 p.m. at Free Times Café, 320 College St., when **Varda Hall Berenstein** sings and talk about Yiddish folksongs. RSVP, yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

BETH SHOLOM BOOK CLUB

Joseph Kertes discusses his book Gratitude at the Beth Sholom Book Club. Thursday, Jan. 8, 7:30 p.m. $15, non-members $20. RSVP, 416-783-6103.

YIDDISH FOR ADULTS

The Committee For Yiddish offers Yiddish-language classes for adults at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Conversation, reading and writing are included at each level. Classes Sundays, 10 a.m.-noon, Jan. 11-March 29, at the Bathurst JCC. $125/12 sessions. Info, contact **Ethel Cooper**, ecooper@ujafed.org or 416-635-2883, ext. 5389.

BAT MITZVAH CLUB

Chabad of Markham begins their Bat Mitzvah Club Sunday, Jan. 11. Students are introduced to the values and teachings of Judaism through a mixture of learning, discussions and fun. To register, call 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

OBSERVANT CHILDREN

Beth David Sisterhood presents **Rabbi Philip Scheim** on "My Child Has Become Much More Observant Than Me." Bring your questions and stories to share. Tuesday, Jan. 13, 8 p.m. Non-members $5.

THE FEMININE PALETTE

Chabad Uptown offers an evening of kosher culinary delights for women with celebrity chef **Susie Fishbein**, author of Kosher by Design. The evening includes a cooking demonstration, entrées and appetizers. Wednesday, Jan. 14, 7 p.m. at the Baycrest Terrace. $54. RSVP, 416- 635-9696 or www.uptownchabad.com.

LITTLE BLOSSOMS

Parents or grandparents are invited to bring their children two and under for a morning of pre-Shabbat fun at Holy Blossom Temple. **Jayne Harvey** leads this weekly program of music, singing, puppets and snack. Each week, participants will go home with their own challah. This eight-week program begins Jan. 16, 10-11:30 a.m., with a 45 minute program followed by free play. To register, please call **Shannon**, 416-789-3291, ext. 227.

DIABETES SELF-CARE

Baycrest Centre offers a free eight-week program to learn self-care practices to live well with diabetes.

Continued on page 25

Class Acts

THE PERFECT GAME: There were strikes, gutter balls and lots of smiles at the United Synagogue Day School, Beth Tikvah campus' recent bowling event. More than 100 bowlers took part. Pictured, at back, are Megan Sager, left, and Hanna Halman; and, at front from left, Danielle Friedman, Rachel Bloom and Ashtyn Robbins

TZEDAKAH FAIR: Grade 7 students at Holy Blossom Temple Religious School listen attentively to a presenter at the school's annual Grade 7 Tzedakah Fair, where a variety of organizations gave students an idea about various local Jewish communal agencies. The agencies included Birthday Angels, Out of the Cold, Save a Child's Heart, Ve'ahavta, the Israel Cancer Research Fund, the One Family Fund and Zareinu.

What's New

Continued from page 24

Learn strategies to maintain brain fitness as you age, lower risk for dementia, heart attack, stroke, and other chronic diseases. Receive 50 minutes of physical activity instruction each session. Facilitated by a psychologist, kinesiologist and dietitian. Must be 18 years with Type 2 diabetes. Register. 416-785-2500, ext. 6228, or diabetes@baycrest.org.

LIMMUD RETURNS FEB. 15

Limmud Toronto, a festival of Jewish learning and culture with over 35 sessions led by Jewish educators, performers and teachers, takes place Sunday, Feb 15, at the Bahen Centre, University of Toronto. Study Torah, liturgy, and Jewish history, go green with a panel on eco-Judaism, learn to write your family memoir, sing along with an instant choir, speak your Jewish experience in poetry, and much more. Free programs for children ages 5-12. Register, www.limmud.ca or 647-838-7004.

EATING DISORDERS

Eating Disorders of York Region provides services, education, support groups for families and friends of individuals who are affected by eating disorders. Free programs offered Monday to Thursday each week. For information, contact 905-886-6632 or visit www.edoyr.com.

FOR SENIORS

Beth Tzedec Congregation Haverim Program presents a video-talk with **Gordon Bean**, professor emeritus, Ryerson University, on "The Music of Rodgers & Hart." Monday, Jan. 5, 1:30 p.m. $2. 416-781-3511

Lunch & Humour Group at the Bernard Betel Centre cafeteria. Tuesdays, beginning Jan. 13, 12:30 p.m. Info, **Susan Lanezil**, 905-771-8818.

Chai Society at Beth Sholom Synagogue Lunch and Learn program hosts **Loretta Tanenbaum**, Wednesday, Jan. 14, noon. $8. To reserve, call 416-783-6103.

The Association of Jewish Seniors host **Steven Shulman** on "The United Jewish Appeal and the Israel Connection" on Thursday, Jan. 15, at 1:30 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. To reserve, call **Tammy**, 416-635-2860.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. hosts **Adam Fuerstenberg** on "**Leonard Cohen**: Troubadour of Love and Pain," his life as reflected in poetry and song. Thursday, Jan. 15, at 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155

Earl Bales Seniors Club In The Park. Casino Rama, Wednesday, Jan. 14; movie day, Thurs. Jan. 15, 1 p.m. $2; conversational Hebrew, Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-noon; bingo, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Call Tuesday-Thursday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881.

Seniors Bridge Club meets twice a week at the Forest Hill Library. New members welcome. Call 416-781-2913.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Register now for winter classes and workshops in visual arts, music and dance for all ages at the Koffler Centre for the Arts. Ext. 269.

Red Cross Babysitters Course, Sunday, Jan. 18, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. $49. Register, ext. 235.

The Jewish Discovery Museum offers the following new programs:

- Shabbat Club – 3- to 5-year-olds sing songs, tell stories, make challah, play games and do Shabbat crafts. Children will come home each week with crafts and songs to share. Fridays, 9:45-11:15 a.m. beginning Jan. 9. Registration, ext. 390.
- My Hebrew Picnic – share Hebrew with your newborn to 2-year-old child through music, puppets and games. Beginners and native Hebrew speakers welcome. Mondays, 10-10:45 a.m., begins Jan. 19.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org

Habonim-Dror Youth Movement Club. Sunday, Jan. 4, 4-6 p.m. Info, jewishlife@mnjcc.org or ext. 154.

"Cooking with **Itka**: Mexican Cuisine." Tuesday, Jan. 6. 7-9:30 p.m. $18. Info, jewishlife@mnjcc.org or ext. 154.

Toronto Jewish Film Society 2009 season membership, eight films, 7:30 p.m. screenings, $95, ages 18-29, $60. Info, joellem@mnjcc.org or ext. 139.

Volunteers Wanted

ASTEH VOLUNTEERS

Jewish Women International of Canada is looking for volunteers for the ASTEH, alternative short-term emergency housing for abused Jewish women and their children program. This program is co-sponsored by Jewish Family and Child. Training provided for new volunteers. For application and interview, call 416-630-9313.

FRIENDLY VISITING

The Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living is a learning and wellness centre committed to maximizing the quality of life for seniors in the community and reflecting Jewish values. Join their team of dedicated volunteers. Friendly Visiting creates lasting, meaningful relationships between seniors and volunteers. With regular friendly visits in person or over the phone, isolated seniors experience improved physical, mental and emotional health. Only one to two hours a week required, and choose the day that best suits your schedule. To volunteer, contact **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112 ext.127 or naomiz@betelcentre.org.

SHAPE LIVES OF TEENS

Help shape the lives of Jewish teens as a B'nai Brith youth adviser. Develop leadership skills while bringing teens closer to their history and heritage. Contact 416-398-2004, ext. 222, or kgoodman@bbyo.org for information.

REENA FOUNDATION

Reena Foundation has some volunteer opportunities. Share office skills by assisting in the busy administration office or help with after-school, evening or Sunday programs for children and adults. Contact **Mille Chadwick**, 905-889-2690, ext. 2112, or e-mail mchadwick@reena.org.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Are you a survivor of abuse who is willing and able to speak about your experiences? Jewish Women International of Canada has initiated a speaker's bureau to educate men and women about the issue of abuse and its effects. They are looking for women who would speak publicly to groups in the Jewish community. Training is provided. Call JWIC 416-630-9313.

SINGLES EVENTS WILL RETURN

CAMPUS DEDICATION: **More than 200 people recently attended a ceremony at which the Montessori Jewish Day School Yeomans Road location was named the Samuel H. Cohen Campus of the Montessori School. The MJDS choir performed at the event. Samuel Cohen, seen in the photo, acknowledged this tribute by reciting the blessing of *Shehechiyanu*.**

NA'AMAT HONOURS MEMBERS: **At the recent Na'amat Canada-Toronto Tribute and Installation event, the Club One Founders Award was presented to Laura Greenberg, left, and the Sylvia Mirsky Award was presented to Shirley Margel, right, by Doris Wexler, newly installed Na'amat Toronto president, centre. [Mollie Rothman photo]**

BEIT HALOCHEM SUPPORTERS TOUR ISRAEL: **Participants in the recent Aid to Disabled Veterans of Israel Beit Halochem Canada mission toured Israel from the Golan to Eilat and met community leaders and members of Israel's armed forces. Beit Halochem works to help the more than 51,000 Israeli disabled veterans and victims of terrorism. For information, call 905-695-0611.**

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Schwartz, Faina	Dec. 10/08	Private
Abramoff, Rabbi Gerald William	Dec. 11/08	
Glassman, David Saul	Dec. 12/08	45 Delayne Dr
Dvoskina, Betti	Dec. 12/08	
Isenberg, Lillian	Dec. 12/08	170 Red Maple Dr
Rudolph, Mary	Dec. 13/08	45 Fairholme Ave
Lobl, Ilona	Dec. 12/08	Private
Roberts, Walter	Dec. 14/08	7300 Yonge St
Lechtman, Shulamit	Dec. 14/08	4326 Coolbrook Ave
Firer, Izchak	Dec. 15/08	5835 Bathurst St
Tenenbaum, Nat	Dec. 15/08	120 Promenade Cir
Kaufman, David Harley	Dec. 15/08	
Schwartz, Morris	Dec. 16/08	1 Clark Ave. W.
Keshen, Edward Albert	Dec. 16/08	131 Torresdale Ave
Randall, Yetta	Dec. 16/08	
Khatinsky, Avraam	Dec. 18/08	4300 Bathurst St
Gottlieb, Arthur	Dec. 18/08	3560 Bathurst St
Vogel, Evelyn	Dec. 11/08	Private

HEDREW BASIC

Gherson Fleischer	Dec 6/08	1 Clark Ave W

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Abraham Klugsberg	Dec 6/08	5835 Bathurst St
Gustav Grossman	Dec 7/08	45 Palm Dr
Lillian Zacks	Dec 6/08	3555 Danforth Ave
Maytie Sivkin	Dec 7/08	175 Hilda Ave
Freda Lampert	Dec 5/08	6269 Point Regal Cir
Selma Goldstein	Dec 8/08	35 Denmark Cres
Rose Sian	Dec 10/08	240 Heath St W
Walter Cohen	Dec 9/08	52 Ava Rd
Ruth Mogil	Dec 10/08	150 Heath St W
Robert Harendorf	Dec 10/08	866 Sheppard Ave W
Ibolya Hochman	Dec 9/08	713 Sheppard Ave W
Neil Hiltz	Dec 8/08	1504 Aurora Ave N
Cipora Offman	Dec 11/08	1 Clark Ave W
Yetta Cohen	Dec 11/08	78 Heatherton Way
Stephen Roth	Dec 12/08	2900 Yonge St
Irwin Koziebrocki	Dec 7/08	69 Prue Ave
Gerald Dubinsky	Dec 12/08	3560 Bathurst St
Arnold Jussem	Dec 11/08	8 Clovercrest Rd
Dalia Orgil	Dec 12/08	1101 Steeles Ave W
John Ackerman	Dec 13/08	3560 Bathurst St
Ben Libman	Dec 14/08	150 Heath Street W

It is with our deepest appreciation that we thank our family and friends for your generosity, friendship, comfort and understanding during our time of sorrow. Your thoughtfulness will be remembered.

The family of
JOSETTE GRAD ז"ל

The unveiling of a monument honouring the memory of
VICKI MARCUS ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, Jan. 11TH
11:00 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Bathurst south of Steeles
Farband of Lithuanian Jews Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

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Iancu Grossu and Adriana, Paul, Daniel, and Deborah Sterescu, the family of the late Frima Grossu, ז"ל wish to thank all their friends and their family for the their kind love and support. We are eternally grateful for your help during these difficult times.

David Harley Kaufman ז"ל
12/15/2008

David Harley Kaufman, passed away December 15th, 2008 at his home surrounded by his loving family. Son of the late Louis and Dolly Kaufman. Beloved husband and best friend of Esther. Father to Jason and his wife Melissa. Brother to Rick and his wife Debbie, son-in-law to Felix and Regina Opatowski. Will be lovingly missed by Toby, Jody, Michael, Naomi, grandson Jackson, Miriam, Leora, and Ami. A chartered accountant, David was also an avid fisherman, boater, and hiker - a lover of all things fast. There are stars whose light reaches the earth, only after they themselves have disintigrated. And there are individuals whose memory lights the world after they have passed from it. These lights shine in the darkest night and illuminate for us the past. A funeral service will be held Wednesday, December 17th, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. from Steeles memorial Chapel, 350 Steeles Ave. W. (Between Yonge and Bathurst) Interment to follow at Pardes Shalom Cemetery, Łodzer section. Shiva will be observed at 48 West Borough St., Thornhill. Visitors after 2 p.m. only. Memorial donations may be made to the Mr. Sinai Hospital 416-586-8290 or to the United Jewish Appeal 416-631-5685.

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Obituary

Hamilton rebbetzin had deep ties with Ramah

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Gloria Silverman – former rebbetzin of Beth Jacob Synagogue in Hamilton, a teacher and then principal of its Hebrew school, and longtime *yoetzet* (adviser) at Camp Ramah in Canada – died Dec. 10 at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, following a lengthy illness. She was 71.

Silverman "found her own way into Jewish life" as a teenager in a Conservative congregation in Bridgeport, Conn., where she grew up.

She met her husband, Rabbi Israel Silverman – then a widower with four small children – when she was on staff at a now-defunct Camp Ramah in New England in 1962, said her daughter Aviva. They married the following year, and had one more child.

Rabbi Silverman, who died five years ago, was serving a congregation in Boston at the time the couple met. He was spiritual leader of Beth Jacob from 1966 to 1996.

The family moved to Hamilton following a two-year stint in New York, where Rabbi Silverman worked for the Jewish Theological Seminary. Gloria had studied at what used to be known as its Teachers Institute.

Aviva Silverman recalls her mother as a "doer" who was in the habit of seeing voids and filling them.

Netta Zweig, Ramah's administrative director and development co-ordinator, remembers Silverman heading to the camp kitchen and preparing Shabbat dinner for 500 when the chef quit on a Friday, she wrote in an e-mail to the Ramah community informing them of Silverman's death.

Former Ramah director Rabbi Mitchell Cohen, now with the National Ramah Commission in New York, told The CJN that Silverman was "the guiding force keeping [the camp] strong on its educational principles. She mentored new directors including myself... She understood every aspect of the camp – it's very rare in a person – and she understood educational priorities. But, also, I'll just remember her and her husband for their menschlich qualities – as sweet, kind, caring people."

The Silvermans were fixtures at Camp Ramah from 1975 until 2002. Rabbi Silverman served as rabbi-in-residence, while Gloria advised counsellors, unit heads and the camp director. For a few years, she ran the camp office over the winter.

A doting grandmother of 16, Silverman took each of her grandchildren, with the exception of the four youngest, on a trip planned around their individual interests for their 10th birthdays. She took two grandsons to Florida to see the Toronto Blue Jays in spring training.

On her own, she was an adventurous traveller, visiting Israel as a young woman and later going to the Grand Canyon, Alaska, Australia and Morocco, recalled her daughter Devorah in a eulogy. To prepare for a trip to Utah, Silverman trained for weeks so that she would be able to hike along with the rest of her group, Devorah added.

At the synagogue, in addition to her involvement with the Hebrew school, Silverman was active in its Out of the Cold program and other social action projects. As well, she taught sisterhood classes in Jewish text study, and organized sisterhood programs.

The first woman to wear a tallit at Beth Jacob, Silverman was also an innovator educationally, developing an educational program for older teenagers, Devorah said.

She leaves her son Judah, of Ottawa; daughters Lanie Goldberg, of Hamilton; Aviva, of Thornhill; Riva, of Norwalk, Conn.; and Devorah, of Teaneck, N.J.; and 16 grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband Rabbi Israel Silverman, her brothers Howard Sussman of Hawaii, and Allan Sussman of Connecticut.

Ramah alumni are invited to submit e-mail reflections on Silverman's impact, at Ramah@jtsa.edu. Some of them may be included in an upcoming book on the history of Ramah at 60, said Rabbi Cohen. As of press time, the deadline was set for the end of January.

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Hamas threatens to assassinate Livni, Barak

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JERUSALEM — Senior Hamas official Fatah Hamad has threatened to assassinate Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Defence Minister Ehud Barak.

Livni and Barak were two of the senior Israeli officials Hamas threatened on Sunday, in response to the Israel Defence Forces assault on the Gaza Strip.

He said Hamas would go after senior Palestinian Authority officials in the West Bank, as well as "those in the Arab world who have conspired against us," – an apparent reference to Egypt.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, however, said that Hamas could have prevented Israel's assault had it only agreed to extend the ceasefire, and he urged it to do so.

Late Sunday, Israel Air Force warplanes attacked a building in the Jebaliya refugee camp next to Gaza City, killing a 14-month-old baby, a Gaza Health Ministry official said.

Earlier Sunday, the IDF massed troops near the Gaza border in preparation for a possible ground operation against Hamas. At the same time, the cabinet approved a relatively small call-up of the reserves – some 6,700 soldiers – in case they are needed for the operation.

Defence sources said, however, that additional reservists may be called up as the fighting continues.

By comparison, only a few thousand reservists were called up in the first days of the Second Lebanon War in 2006. By the end of the war, however, some 62,000 reservists had been called up.

Tzipi Livni

The air force struck more than 100 targets Sunday, the second day of Israel's aerial bombardment of Gaza. According to Palestinian sources, the bombings killed 43 people, bringing the death toll to about 300.

Among the targets were 40 tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border, which Israel bombed in an effort to shut down Hamas' main conduit for smuggling arms. That operation took four minutes.

Ehud Barak

Most of the targets, however, were in Gaza City, including Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh's office and the offices of various Palestinian security services. The air force also hit several targets in northern Gaza, the main launching pad for Palestinian rocket strikes on Israel.

Palestinians fired about 30 rockets at Israel on Sunday. For the first time, Sunday's launches included two enhanced Katyusha rockets with a 40-kilometre range. Both landed near Ashdod.

Due to the fighting, southern Israel resembled a ghost town on Sunday. The only vehicles on the roads belonged to journalists, the police and, mainly, the army.

Livni told the foreign media that Israel does not aim to reoccupy Gaza, and government sources said the Foreign Ministry is working on an exit strategy, one that would not involve stationing an international force in Gaza.

Israel promised representatives of international aid organizations that it would continue allowing humanitarian aid into Gaza. On Sunday, the Kerem Shalom crossing was opened to let through 26 trucks carrying food and medical equipment.

By the end of Monday, the third day of Operation Cast Lead, Israel was close to exhausting its target bank for aerial bombing. At that point, it would have to either launch a ground operation or bring the campaign to a speedy conclusion.

Iran weighs in on Gaza

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday issued a religious decree to Muslims around the world, ordering them to defend Palestinians against Israel's attacks on Gaza, state television said.

In his statement on Sunday, Khamenei also criticized some Arab governments for their "encouraging silence" towards Israel's raids on Gaza.

Meanwhile, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said on Sunday the Islamist group Hamas could have avoided the Israeli attacks on Gaza.

"We talked to them and we told them 'please, we ask you, do not end the truce. Let the truce continue and not stop' so that we could have avoided what happened," he said in Cairo.

The TV images of dead and wounded Gazans has inflamed Arab public opinion, and protests erupted in Arab Israeli villages, the West Bank and elsewhere in the Arab world.

The campaign embarrassed moderate Arab regimes that have encouraged Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking and weakened Hamas' rival, Abbas, who has ruled only the West Bank since Hamas violently seized control of Gaza in June 2007.

Abbas condemned the attacks on Saturday, but fearing violence could spiral out of control, his forces also broke up protests in the West Bank.

Israeli killed as barrage of rockets pound west Negev

By AMOS HAREL
AND YANIR YAGNA
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.

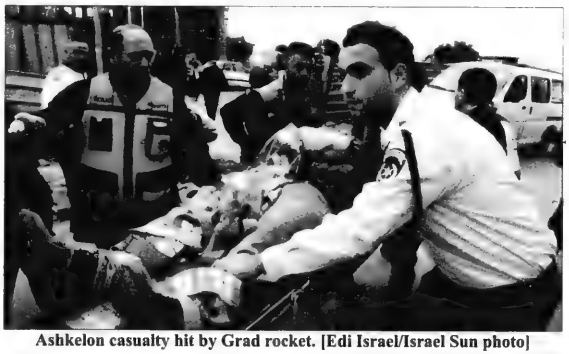
ASHKELON — One Israeli was killed and fourteen others were wounded by a Palestinian Grad missile, which exploded near a construction site in the coastal town of Ashkelon.

Most of the victims were construction workers from the Galilee village of Manda and the Bedouin town of Rahat. Five were considered in serious condition, four sustained moderate wounds, and five suffered light injuries.

The man who was killed was named as 27-year-old construction worker Hani al Mahdi, from the Bedouin village of Aroer.

Curious onlookers gathered at the scene despite the Home Front Command's directive to avoid loitering in groups outdoors.

At least 40 rockets have been fired into Israel since Monday morning – nine of which hit Ashkelon, five struck Sderot and four others which struck various towns in the western Negev. One home in Sderot sustained a direct hit. Channel 2 reported that the residents of the home have been treated for shock.



Ashkelon casualty hit by Grad rocket. [Edi Israel/Israel Sun photo]

"I'm standing next to the body," Ashkelon Mayor Benny Vaknin told Israel Radio by telephone, on the third day of an Israeli air offensive in the Gaza Strip. "To my great regret, we have a fatality. He was killed."

Sirens wailed intermittently on Monday morning in Ashkelon as television crews captured footage of panicked residents seeking cover from the incoming projectiles.

On Sunday, Gaza-based Palestinians launched a barrage of at least 40 rockets at the western Negev as the Israel Air Force continued to bomb targets in the Strip.

Also on Sunday, two Katyusha rockets, with a diameter of 122 mm, exploded near Ashdod. More than 30 kilometers from Gaza, this was the deepest into Israel a Palestinian rocket has yet to strike.

The Katyushas, which are the most improved versions of the Palestinian rockets, have a range of up to 40 kilometers. The particular rockets that struck on Sunday travelled 37 and 35 kilometers.

UN calls for immediate halt to violence

By NATASHA MOZGOVAYA
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations Security Council called early on Sunday for an immediate end to all violence in Gaza.

The UN issued the statement after the death toll climbed past 270 on the second day of Israeli air strikes in the Gaza Strip in retaliation for rocket and mortar fire into Israel by Gaza militants.

The statement, agreed upon after four hours of closed-door council discussions, called on all parties to address "the serious humanitarian and economic needs in Gaza."

It urged them to take necessary measures to ensure Gaza's people were supplied with food, fuel and medical treatment.

Security Council members "stressed the need for the restoration of calm in full" – a reference to a six-month ceasefire ended by Hamas on Dec. 19 – to open the way for a Palestinian-Israeli political solution.

Diplomats from several countries said they preferred the cautiously worded statement on which all 15 council members could agree, to a public debate in which they would have clashed angrily over who was to blame for the Gaza violence.

"We have had over the years many occasions when we had long meetings of the Security Council, strong statements were made and they did not affect anything," Russian ambassador Vitaly Churkin said. "Our hope and our expectation is that this modest... press statement is going to have an impact."

But within minutes of the statement being issued, diplomats gave conflicting interpretations of it.

Palestinian ambassador Riyad Mansour said it was clearly aimed at Israel. He told reporters that Palestinians would now be waiting to see if Israel stopped its "aggression."

If Israel did not do so within 24 or 48 hours, he said, "We, the Arab nations and our friends... will come back knocking on the door of the Security Council in order to bring Israel into compliance."

But U.S. ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad said the "way forward" was for the Gaza militants to stop rocket attacks on Israel.

"Clearly in that context Israel has the right of self-defence, and nothing in this press statement should be read as anything but that," he told journalists.

Israeli ambassador Gabriela Shalev said Israel would "wait and see if Hamas is really going to abide by the... statement of the Security Council and we'll draw the conclusions," but did not make clear whether Israel would halt its offensive.

Israel "did not think it was so urgent for the Security Council, after not being involved in the situation for such a long time, to rush and call for the end of an operation which is taking place in order to protect our citizens," she said.

The UN held emergency consultations Saturday night and early Sunday on the Israeli bombings in Hamas-ruled Gaza and debated whether to adopt a statement urging Israel to halt its military operations without delay.

Libya, on behalf of the Arab group of nations at the UN, called the late-night council meeting, after Israeli warplanes rained more than 100 tons of bombs on security sites in Gaza on Saturday and early Sunday.

Ban Ki-Moon

"There is no justification for this whatsoever," Mansour, the Palestinian ambassador, told reporters before the council began its closed-door consultations. "This collective punishment is inhumane, immoral and should be stopped immediately.

"There is no justification for punishing 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza because of the actions of a few. The Security Council should demand that this be stopped immediately."

Libyan diplomats were pressing for an open council meeting and adoption of a presidential statement. But there appeared to be reluctance among some members to hold an open meeting because of concerns of inflaming the situation.

Instead, Russia circulated a proposed press statement, which is less important than a presidential statement because it does not become part of the council's official record, but still reflects the views of the UN's most powerful body.

The Russian draft expresses serious concern at the escalation of the situation in Gaza, stresses the need for the restoration of calm, and calls for an immediate opening of the border crossings into Gaza and for an unrestricted humanitarian access in the area, including supplies of food, fuel and provision of medical treatment.

Defence Minister Ehud Barak on Sunday did permit the borders to be partially opened to let in medical supply and basic humanitarian aid, Israel Radio reported.

The Arabs proposed a number of amendments to the Russian text, including urging Israel to halt its military operations immediately, stressing the numerous Palestinian deaths, especially among civilians as well as the destruction of property.

Earlier Saturday, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expressed deep alarm at the violence and bloodshed in Gaza and condemned Israel's excessive use of force leading to the death and injury of civilians.

He also expressed deep alarm at the continuing rocket attacks by Palestinian militants in southern Israel and expressed deep distress that repeated calls on Hamas for these attacks to end have gone unheeded, UN deputy spokesperson Marie Okabe said.

"He appeals for an immediate halt to all violence," she said.

The UN said Ban made calls about the escalating violence to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak and Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, the presidents of Egypt and Turkey, the foreign ministers of Russia and Britain, the head of the Arab League and the European Union's foreign policy chief.

The Arab League also scheduled an emergency meeting late Saturday to discuss the situation in Gaza.

The United States, Israel's closest ally, blamed Hamas for the situation.

"These people are nothing but thugs, so Israel is going to defend its people against terrorists like Hamas that indiscriminately kill their own people," White House spokesperson Gordon Johndroe said.

Rice on Saturday said that the United States holds Hamas responsible for the renewal of violence in the Gaza Strip. Nearly 300 Palestinians and one Israeli have been killed since the fighting began on Saturday morning,

Rice briefed president-elect Barack Obama on the situation in Gaza. President George W. Bush has spoken to regional leaders and the administration will remain in close contact, the White House said in a statement.

Australia's Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard also blamed Hamas for the breakdown in calm.

Meanwhile, the Chinese Foreign Ministry issued a statement denouncing the violence and calling on both sides to show restraint. Indonesia accused Israel of breaching the terms of the Annapolis accord drafted in late 2007 and called on it to cease attacking Gaza.

Protesters take to the streets

JTA

Thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in Arab and European countries to protest Israel's operation in Gaza.

Rallies condemning Israel's operation in Gaza were held Sunday in countries including Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates, as well as in London. In Mosul, Iraq, a suicide bomber blew himself up in a crowd of more than 1,000 demonstrators.

More than 50,000 protested in cities throughout Egypt, according to the BBC. Demonstrators in Dubai protested in front of the Palestinian consulate.

Police in London arrested three protesters Sunday after a demonstration outside the Israeli Embassy turned violent as a small group of demonstrators attempted to break into the private road where the embassy is located. At least three people were arrested on suspicion of public order offences after riot police were called in to restore order.

Another demonstration was planned for Monday.

Gaza used as terrorist haven for Hamas, says Barak

Continued from page 1

Barak told the assembled lawmakers that the defence establishment spent months preparing for the Gaza operation.

Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu criticized the Arab protests while calling on Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to dismiss minister Raleb Majadele, the lone Arab serving in the cabinet.

Arab Knesset members repeatedly accused the government of waging a war for electioneering purposes and accused the defence minister of intentionally killing children.

Russian-Israeli MK Avigdor Lieberman said that the Arab lawmakers ought to relocate to Gaza and not return. The Arab MKs replied by calling him a "fascist" and insisted that he should return to the country where he came from.

"There are those who are counting bodies and at the same time counting Knesset seats," Israeli Arab MK Ahmed Tibi said. "Bodies for votes – this is done primarily by the Labor party."

Israeli Arab MK Mohammed Barakeh said, "There are those who are profiting from Palestinian blood in order to get elected."

Barakeh and MK Taleb a-Sana were subsequently evicted from the plenum.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni lashed out at Hamas, imploring foreign leaders to not judge Israel solely on the images broadcast on television screens.

"Israel is acting against Hamas and not against the population," Livni said. "We are once again making clear that whoever has complaints over the state of the population [in Gaza] should take them to those who have responsibility over the situation there – Hamas."

Livni made reference to Hani al-Mahdi, a 27-year-old man from Ar'ur who was killed by a Palestinian rocket in Ashkelon on Dec. 29.

"A state must defend all of its citizens," she said. "I heard on the way here that Hamas announced that the man killed by the rocket in Ashkelon was one of the Zionists, even though he is an Israeli Arab. They do not make this distinction."

Israel Briefs

Separation fence

Israel must complete construction of the West Bank separation fence surrounding Jerusalem by 2010, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said.

Of the 490-mile-long network of fences and walls Israel is building in and along the occupied West Bank, one-fifth runs around Jerusalem, including key eastern parts of the Holy City, where Palestinians want a capital for future statehood.

More than two-thirds of the Jerusalem barrier is finished, the statement said. Of the outstanding sections, 4.5 kilometres (one mile) have been held up by legal challenges, filed for Palestinian residents who fear losing access to farmland or city services.

Bush crash inquiry

Israel's Transportation Ministry will set up its own inquiry committee into last month's bus crash near Eilat, which killed 24 people and wounded dozens more.

The committee will not be established until after the police have finished the initial phase of their investigation, and the ministry has not yet decided who will sit on it. However, the ministry believes its own inquiry is important to examine problems that it might need to address, such as poor infrastructure or excessively high speed limits.

The crash occurred when the bus driver lost control as he was trying to pass on a dangerous curve. The bus smashed through the road barrier and tumbled over a cliff.

The police think the driver was probably obeying the speed limit, but claim this limit is too high for Route 12's dangerous conditions.

Pay raise waived

Due to the difficult economic times, Israel's Knesset members will waive a 2009 pay raise.

The Knesset House committee decided that lawmakers would give up an automatic three per cent pay raise in January, according to reports. Knesset members earn about $8,300 a month and receive raises tied to the retail price index four times a year. They also get the use of a car.

Elections

Israeli voters will be able to ask candidates for national elections questions via YouTube.

The initiative, spearheaded by Israel's Channel 2, is similar to interactive initiatives from the U.S. presidential campaign.

Internet users can upload a 25-second video with a question for a candidate.

Some entrants will be invited to participate in Channel 2's live interview with the candidates for prime minister.

$300M for startup

A major American medical technology company purchased an Israeli startup for $300 million.

St. Jude Medical, which serves doctors and patients in more than 100 countries, purchased MediGuide, which has developed technology and products for procedures that are minimally invasive.

MediGuide was founded in 2000 after spinning off from Elbit Systems, an Israel-based global defence electronic company.

Toledo cemetery

The Spanish government has ordered a freeze on a building project in a medieval Jewish cemetery in Toledo.

More than 100 graves have been exhumed from the building site, an expansion of a nearby state school, according to Rabbi Abraham Ginsburg, executive director of the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe. Toledo regional authorities are currently storing more than 100 skeletons in separate boxes.

Files from JTA, Ha'aertz

Madoff scandal reaches into Canada

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The financial scandal that has rocked American Jewish charities has also claimed a Canadian victim – though not to the extent felt in the United States.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto took a $486,000 (Cdn) hit as a result of an investment that was indirectly linked to alleged fraudster Bernard Madoff.

"Although any loss is regrettable, and we are by no means minimizing its significance, our exposure is very small compared to other individuals and organizations," said Howard English, vice-president of corporate communications for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. "On any given day, considering the size of Jewish Foundation assets and the amount that we invest, market fluctuations of $486,000 either up or down, would not be unusual. In other words, when market conditions are good, we can just as easily make $486,000."

The nearly half a million dollars referred to by English is the income that would be generated by a $5.4 million (Cdn) investment in a fund of funds, which included an investment vehicle managed by Madoff. A fund of funds invests in a basket of other investment funds rather than directly purchasing stocks, bonds or other securities. One of the funds was run by Madoff, a financial guru who managed massive amounts of money invested with him by many American Jews and Jewish charities.

Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto takes $486,000 hit

Madoff reportedly lost $50 billion US in what prosecutors claim was a giant Ponzi scheme that relied on new investments to provide substantial and stable returns to earlier investors. Among the biggest losers are Yeshiva University ($110 million US), Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America ($90 million US), the Chais Family Foundation, which funds Jewish higher education in Russia ($178 million US), as well as a foundation run by Elie Wiesel to benefit Ethiopians in Israel. The Robert I. Lappin Charitable Foundation, which provides money for Jewish day schools and camps and funds trips to Israel, announced it was closing after losing more than $7 million managed by Madoff.

The Forward, a New York-based Jewish newspaper, reported that 24 Jewish charities lost large amounts invested with Madoff.

English said returns from the fund of funds connected to Madoff generated "steady returns for 12 years without problems." With about $200 million (Cdn) in total assets, the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto relies on professional money managers to determine investments, plus the input of a lay investment committee. The expected half-million-dollar loss is only .26 per cent of the foundation's total assets.

English said the foundation's investment experts aren't prepared to write off the $5.4 million investment that produced the $486,000 return.

"We believe the $5 million is recoverable. We hired an investment consultant who is looking into it, and he believes there is a good chance it is recoverable," he said.

Furthermore, English continued, "the amount in question did not belong to any one donor, nor will it adversely affect any one beneficiary agency. It has no impact whatsoever on disbursements to agencies from the UJA Federation annual campaign."

In Montreal, meanwhile, Richard Kleinman, executive director of the Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal, said, "We had no connection to Madoff… We have checked around Montreal and, to our knowledge, no one is tied to the Madoff scandal."

The foundation's assets have dropped to $250 million from $300 million, but that is due to market forces unconnected to Madoff, Kleinman added.

One Montreal-based organization, Canadian Hadassah WIZO, announced it had no connection with Hadassah in the United States, which lost millions. "We don't do joint investments," said Alina Ianson, executive director of Canadian Hadassah WIZO. The Canadian organization is a separate legal entity, and even memberships are not reciprocal.

"We are not involved with Madoff in any way, shape or form," she stressed.

In Toronto, Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of the Canadian Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, said they "have not been affected [by the Madoff scandal] thankfully," while Steve Rabinowitz, a spokesperson for Taglit-Birthright Israel in both Canada and the United States, dismissed reports the organization was affected by the financial fraud.

"Bernard Madoff was not a donor to Taglit-Birthright Israel nor to its foundation, and since the foundation uses all available funds for Taglit trips, they have no funds to speak of to place under investment.

"No donors to the program have reported that they are affected by the situation, either. Therefore, Birthright is essentially unaffected by the scandal. But because of reports that the Robert I. Lappin Foundation… has discontinued its programs and terminated all of its staff due to investments with Madoff's securities fund and because of speculation about the finances of Birthright's largest funders, Dr. Miriam and Sheldon Adelson – unrelated to the Madoff scheme – there has been confusion, and also incorrect rumours, about the health of Taglit-Birthright Israel.

"Birthright Israel has announced that they will take all participants who were accepted to 2008-2009 winter trips, are determined to meet all 2009 goals, and just raised over $2 million US at their gala dinner in New York.

"Taglit-Birthright was completely unaffected by Bernie Madoff," he said.

Car runs people over at Chanukah party

JTA

NEW YORK — Fourteen people, including six children, were injured Dec. 25 when a car crashed into a storefront in Woodmere, N.Y., where a Chanukah celebration was taking place.

Nassau County police say that a driver lost control of his car, crashing through the building's windows and knocking people over inside, according to The Associated Press. Police have not yet released the name of the driver, but Newsday reported that the car was registered to Theodore Saretsky, 76, a psychologist with no record of accidents or violations. No charges had been filed as of Friday morning.

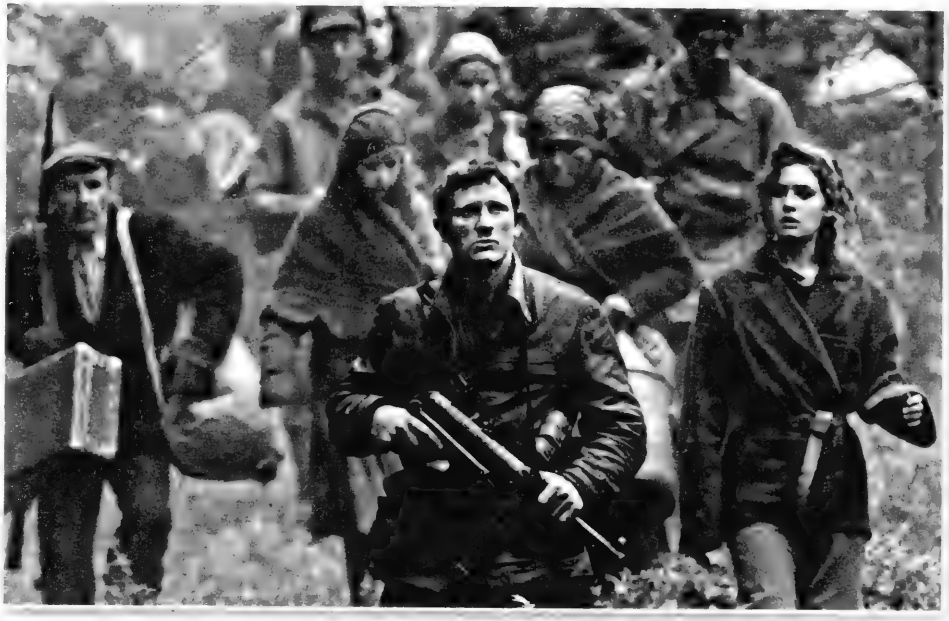
AP reported that four people, including two of the children, were hospitalized in serious condition, and an 8-year-old and 4-year-old are in stable condition. Between 100 and 150 people were attending the party, sponsored by Chabad of Five Towns

It took about 30 people to lift the BMW sport utility vehicle off a man who was trapped under the front tire, Newsday reported, quoting Leo Shalamoff, owner of Pizza Pious, a kosher restaurant across the street.

"We saw the man under the car. It was terrible. It was difficult. There was maybe 30 men picking up the car but suddenly we did it. We pulled him out and helped him to the ambulance," Shalamoff was quoted as saying. "There was blood all over."

Defiance tells of brothers' struggle against the Nazis

By BONNIE LAUFER
Special to The CJN



Daniel Craig sheds his Bond outfit for that of a Jewish resistance fighter in Defiance.

There aren't many well-known stories from World War II about Jewish resistance-fighters, but a new movie opening next month focuses on three brothers who had the incredible will and determination to live during a time that didn't give Jews much hope.

Defiance, based on Nechama Tec's non-fiction book of the same name, is directed by Edward Zwick (Blood Diamond) and stars Daniel Craig, Jamie Bell and Liev Schreiber as Jewish brothers who flee Nazi-occupied Poland and build a makeshift village alongside Russian resistance-fighters.

The year is 1941, and the Jews of eastern Europe are being massacred by the thousands. Managing to escape death, the three brothers take refuge in the dense surrounding woods they have known since they were children. There the brothers begin their fight against the Nazis and turn a primitive struggle to survive into a way to avenge the deaths of their loved ones by saving thousands of others.

At first it is all they can do to stay alive. But gradually, as whispers of their plan spreads, they begin to attract others – men and women, young and old – willing to risk everything for the sake of a moment's freedom.

All three Bielski Brothers are tough, but they're also different in many ways. Tuvia (Craig) is a reluctant leader, and his decisions are challenged by his brother, Zus (Schreiber), who worries that Tuvia's idealistic plans will doom them all. Asael (Bell) is the youngest and caught between his brothers' rivalry. As a brutal winter descends, they work to create a community, and to keep faith alive when all humanity appears to be lost.

Their struggle was their saviour. When the war was over, 1,200 people emerged from that forest anxious to start new and hopeful lives.

It took director Ed Zwick 10 years to get the brother's story made into a film.

"Once I read the book I swore I was going to get to make it someday," Zwick said during a recent interview in Los Angeles. "The story needed to be told, it just took a long time. We just never gave up."

Casting was of the utmost importance, and although Craig is best known as the latest James Bond, there was no question that Zwick wanted him to play the brother who ultimately became the leader of the forest camp.

"I think it's a statement of his artistic ambition," says Zwick of Craig's commitment to the film. "He was an independent working actor long before he became James Bond, and I think he's determined to remain one."

Schreiber, one of the few Jewish actors on set, was totally committed to the project and even learned to speak Russian for the role.

"For me, that was the way into the character," Schreiber said. "Zus, began and ended with Russian so there was something about learning that language that really helped motivate me."

Bell, who entertained audiences eight years ago in Billy Elliot, was challenged by his part in the movie and felt ashamed that he hadn't heard of the Bielski Brothers before getting the script.

"I thought that I had a pretty extensive knowledge of the Holocaust and the Second World War, but then I read the story, and I felt embarrassed that I didn't know this story and about Jewish resistance and resilience," Bell said. "Learning about this I felt like I desperately had to be a part of this project and the telling of these brothers' legacy."

The movie was shot on location in Lithuania, and it was important to Zwick and the cast to keep the conditions as bare bones as possible.

"It was freezing and damp," said Alexa Davalos, who plays Tuvia's love interest, Lilka. "We didn't have trailers, we worked out in the snow for hours and the food was kept to a minimum.

"We knew we could have never experienced what the Jews went through at the time, but the conditions kept things in perspective and helped us bond as a community. It was a very humbling experience."

For Schreiber, it was more than just a humbling experience. As the father of two young sons, the actor felt that making a film like this was an important way to keep the memories alive for his children.

"It's a huge part of my culture, both as a father and as a Jew to remember things and to keep that tradition of memory alive because it is such an essential part of my heritage. This is certainly a story from that episode of history that I hope they do remember, because it's such a triumphant one."

Defiance opens Jan. 16.

Message to CJN Snowbirds

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Toronto writer creates CBC fantasy drama Being Erica

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

Ever look back at your life and regret a decision you've made? What if you could change the past?

That's the premise behind writer/producer Jana Sinyor's new series, Being Erica, a one-hour drama about Erica Strange, a character who goes back in time and relives her past.

"Erica Strange is a Jewish girl in Toronto who's middle class, smart, pretty, popular in school. But when she hits her early 30s, her life isn't turning out the way she thought – her friends have great jobs, a lot of them are married and have children, and she's adrift. She's got the whole package, but for some reason she can't meet a great guy," Sinyor explained in an interview from her production office at Toronto Film Studios.

One day, Erica meets Dr. Tom, a mysterious therapist who offers to help her if she'll commit to therapy. Under his control, she goes back in time to recreate her past.

"She doesn't realize it, but his office exists everywhere," Sinyor said. "Erica can open any door, and Dr. Tom can decide to bring her in. Or she'll go through a door at work and be in his office. Doorways are a symbol in the show – she can cross a threshold and be in another time."

The show covers different periods of Erica's life, including the day she lost her virginity, the day of her bat mitzvah, and family events connected to holidays like Yom Kippur. Some episodes delve into what happens when someone you love marries someone you think is wrong for them.

Jana Sinyor

"There's a lot of pressure for women, once you're a certain age, to achieve certain things in your life – career-wise, marriage-wise and child-wise. If you don't hit those milestones, there can be the feeling of failure," said Sinyor, who, like Erica, is 30-something.

Sinyor is one of Canada's youngest and most accomplished television writer/producers. She is best known for co-creating YTV's Dark Oracle, which garnered her and fellow creator Heather Conkie the 2005 International Emmy in the best children's and youth category; and for writing several episodes of the popular Degrassi: The Next Generation.

"At the end of Dark Oracle, I went to different producers to see if they wanted to collaborate. When I met David Fortier and Ivan Schneeberg, co-presidents of Temple Street Productions, I immediately liked them. They are incredibly creative," she said.

Fortier and Schneeberg, who became executive producers of Being Erica, also produced Citytv's Canada's Next Top Model and CBC's How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?

"Getting my own show early in the game and being able to produce, write and learn all the aspects of production were invaluable," she said.

Sinyor and former Degrassi executive producer Aaron Martin oversee everything on Being Erica – wardrobe, art department, directors, casting, writing team and post-production for the show.

The cast includes Erin Karpluk (The L Word) as Erica, Michael Riley (This is Wonderland) as Dr. Tom, Kathleen Laskey (The Eleventh Hour) as Erica's mother and Reagan Pasternak (Just Buried) as Julianne.

"We all have things that we wish we could do differently and have ideas of what our life is supposed to be like. When things don't happen, we can think we're failing. Being Erica explores that experience."

The series premieres Jan. 5 at 9 p.m. on CBC Television. You can check out Erica Strange's blog at www.beingerica.ca.

Father and son team up

By ADAM MICHAEL SEGAL
Special to The CJN

For the first time ever in Toronto, famed pianist Anton Kuerti will play in concert with his acclaimed maestro son, Julian.

The historic musical event, which is presented by Mooredale Concerts and will also feature the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, will take place on Jan. 11 at the MacMillian Theatre.

"I always look forward to playing together with him," says Julian of his father, who is widely regarded as one of Canada's leading musicians.

"It's even more special that we get to do this in Toronto, our home town."

The father and son combo, along with the orchestra, will be performing works by Felix Mendelssohn, Bela Bartok and Beethoven's Symphony 8 in F.

"The first piece… by Béla Bartók is a wonderful and short portrait of five different aspects of village life in rural Hungary," explains Julian, who is into his second season as the assistant conductor of the renowned Boston Symphony Orchestra.

"The Piano Concerto No. 1 and the Capriccio Brillante (by Mendelssohn) both feature the piano as solo instrument, and are virtuosi and very exciting. The program ends with Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, which is perhaps his most 'classical' work in the symphonic medium."

Though this is their Toronto debut as a tandem, the Kuertis made quite a splash the last time they played together.

It was in March and Anton was supposed to be a member of the audience.

"[Julian] had a set of four concerts and this was the last and only one I was free to attend," recalls Anton.

"As I was taking a shower, two hours before concert time, the urgent phone call came in asking whether I would play."

The scheduled pianist had suddenly taken ill and concert organizers were in a bind.

Despite the extremely short notice and the fact he had not rehearsed with the orchestra, Anton filled in to the crowd's great surprise and pleasure.

"Father and son showed why some warhorses deserve their status – how, with enough intelligence and daring, even familiar music can seem new," praised the Boston Globe of the impromptu joint effort.

Austrian-born Anton began making headlines as early as age 11, when he played piano alongside the Boston Pops Orchestra.

His stellar reputation as a solo pianist is international in scope and he is also quite the recording machine, including recordings of all the Beethoven concertos and sonatas, as well as Schubert and Brahms concertos.

Earlier in 2008, Anton, who is presently artistic director of Mooredale Concerts, was bestowed with the well deserved Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award as part of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards.

Julian, who is in his early 30s, trained as a violinist for most of his life and later made the switch to conducting.

His reputation is constantly on the rise and positive reviews are all the rage.

Mooredale Concerts will also be putting on its Music & Truffles children's series on Jan. 11, featuring a performance of The Snow Queen.

For tickets to either of these events, please phone 416-922-3714 ext. 103 or visit www.mooredaleconcerts.com.

Anton Kuerti, left, with son Julian.

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Woman tracks down aunt's Holocaust diary

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Mariette Job

"Through her diary you can sense what kind of a person she was," said Mariette Job. "She was unforgettable, very intelligent, sensitive, strong. Altogether, an exceptional individual."

Job was talking about her late relative, Helene Berr, whose posthumous diary, The Journal of Helene Berr, was recently published in Canada by McClelland & Stewart after its publishing debut in France last year.

Berr, born in Paris in 1921, was a 21-year-old Jewish student of English literature at the Sorbonne when she started keeping a journal in April 1942, the second year of Germany's occupation of France. The scion of an assimilated family, she stopped writing seven months later, only to resume her entries in August 1943.

At regular intervals, Berr gave the pages of her diary to the family cook, Andree Bardiau, with instructions to pass them on to Berr's fiancé, Jean Morawiecki, if she was arrested by the Germans.

Morawiecki, who left Paris in the autumn of 1942 to join the French army in North Africa, obtained the diary in 1945, keeping it until Job tracked it down years later.

Job's mother, Denise, was Berr's older sister. Married in 1943 to François Job, Denise survived the German occupation, thanks to a Christian acquaintance who hid her. Mariette Job, her daughter, was born in 1950.

Berr and her parents, Raymond and Antoinette, were not as fortunate.

Raymond, the managing director of a chemical company, was arrested in June 1942 and interned in the Drancy transit camp outside Paris. Released several months later after a ransom was paid, he was rearrested in March 1944, along with his wife and daughter Helene.

Berr's parents perished in Auschwitz, while she died of typhus in Bergen-Belsen, only days before the camp was liberated by the Allies in April 1945.

In 1992, Job decided to look for the diary, a typed version of which she had read. "For me, it was an act of rebellion against silence," she said in an interview in Toronto in November.

Job deduced it might be in Morawiecki's possession, since Berr had dedicated it to him.

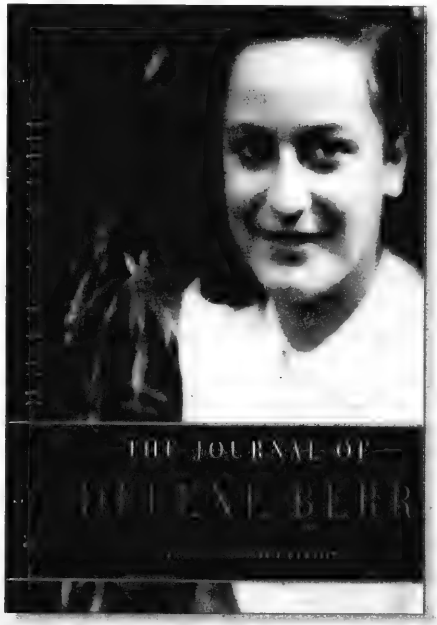
"When I met Jean, I just wanted to see and feel the diary," she said. "I had no intention of asking for it."

After several meetings, Morawiecki – who died this past November – offered Job the diary in 1994. "He wanted me to be its custodian and spiritual heir. I think he felt relieved to pass it on to me."

In an afterward in The Journal of Helene Berr titled A Stolen Life, Job writes, "What I had in my hands was a brown envelope containing a set of undamaged sheets from a student notepad. This long diary, whose form speaks of its author's personality, is handwritten in paragraphs, with almost no crossings out, without any revisions. The text is astonishingly clear. It flows without any retractions, in a single sweep, maintaining a perfect balance between thought and feeling."

Job donated the diary to the Memorial de la Shoah in Paris in 2002. Before it was first published, translation rights were sold in more than a dozen countries, including Israel.

"It was my idea to have it published," said Job, speaking through an interpreter. "Helene's diary is special. The story represents immortality. The Nazis could kill her body but not her soul."



Although comparisons have been made between The Journal of Helene Berr and The Diary of Anne Frank, Job believes they are facile.

"Helene was almost 10 years older than Anne. Hence, Helene's diary is more mature. Anne was shut off from the world in an attic. Helene was free to roam."

Drawing lessons from Berr's fate and France's complicity in the Holocaust, Job observed, "What happened was unthinkable, but the war showed that real assimilation had not taken place in France. Assimilation didn't work."

Anti-Semitism is deeply rooted in French society, she said, adding that while the French state has done a great deal to commemorate the Holocaust, France has yet to fully come to terms with it. Still, she was deeply moved by the sympathetic reception Berr's diary garnered in France.

She has nothing but contempt for Holocaust deniers and the lies they spread. "Nothing could be more horrible. It is as if the victims are being murdered again."

Yet Job evinces a silver lining. "Holocaust deniers have pushed historians to dig even deeper."

Arts & Travel

Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

HANNAH MOSCOVITCH PLAY EAST OF BERLIN RETURNS TO TARRAGON THEATRE

By popular demand, Tarragon Theatre is bringing back **Hannah Moscovitch**'s East of Berlin, about a Paraguayan man who must confront the truth about his father's past as a Nazi doctor in the concentration camps.

Since Moscovitch first developed the play in Tarragon's playwright unit, it has had several successful productions. The remounted production previews Jan. 6 and runs Jan. 7 to Feb. 1. $45 to $20. 30 Bridgman Ave. 416-531-1827

* * *

Moonstruck at the ROM: The Royal Ontario Museum showcases some dazzling specimens from its vast collection of minerals, gems, meteorites and rocks, reputed to be among the finest in North America. The rarities include the world's largest known lunar meteorite, a 9.6-kilogram rock that is one of only 44 recognized lunar meteorites. It goes on display for three months only. The baubles are on view in the ROM's new Teck suite of galleries. www.rom.on.ca

* * *

Young, Jewish & Female: Jewish Girl Power is a short film about growing up Jewish and female at the beginning of the 21st century. The 13-minute film features five 14-year-old girls from Toronto talking candidly and often humorously about their lives, including their experiences of anti-Semitism and sexism, and their thoughts on intermarriage. It was directed and produced by **Nora Gold** and is available online free of charge. www.noragold.com

* * *

From Germany to Hollywood: Hear the heroic, often harrowing, tales of German artists in wartime Tinseltown in Cinema's Exiles: From Hitler to Hollywood, a two-hour documentary narrated by Sigourney Weaver.

The film recalls the experiences of the artists who fled to Hollywood after Hitler banned Jews from working in the German film industry. Some would change the face of American film by creating enduring classics such as Sunset Boulevard, The Bride of Frankenstein, The Adventures of Robin Hood, Ninotchka, Double Indemnity, High Noon, Some Like It Hot and Casablanca.

The film features the stories of actors **Felix Bressart**, **Hedy Lamarr** and **Peter Lorre**; directors **Fritz Lang**, **Henry Koster**, **Billy Wilder** and **Fred Zinnemann**; composers **Frederick Hollander**, **Erich Wolfgang Korngold** and **Franz Waxman**; and cinematographer **Rudy Mate**, among others. It premières on the American PBS television channel on Thursday, Jan. 1, 9:30 p.m.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Comedian **Deb Filler** stars in Well, I'll Tell Ya, a one-woman show at the Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Jan. 29, Jan. 31 and Feb. 1. Tickets are $25. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org or www.fillerup.ca

• The Free Times Cafe recently marked the 25th anniversary of its weekly Monday evening open stage with a celebration featuring remarks by founder **Judy Perly** and performances by **Noah Zacharin**, **Peter Boyd**, **Brian Gladstone** and others. For details of the well-known Sunday "Bella! Did Ya Eat?" brunch and other activities, visit the website www. freetimescafe.com or phone 416-967-1078.

• The National Film Board Mediatheque features a winter carnival with activities and animated holiday films for kids at bargain prices. Upcoming screenings include the feature film Flipping Out by Israeli director **Yoav Shamir**, which presents "a close-up look at former soldiers of the Israeli army as they follow a strange post-military odyssey." (Jan. 27 and 29). NFB Mediatheque, 150 John St. at Richmond. 416-973-3012. www.nfb.ca/mediatheque

•Patrons of Soulpepper Theatre Company's production of A Christmas Carol have raised more than $74,000 for the Daily Bread Food Bank since 2001, artistic director **Albert Schultz** has announced, adding that matching corporate donations have upped the figure to $134,000. **Joseph Zeigler**, who plays Ebenezer Scrooge each year, ends each performance with a plea for donations. The young actors who play the Cratchit children accept the donations from patrons in the atrium as they exit.

Cellist mixes Old and New World sounds

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

When cellist Kristina Reiko Cooper moved to Israel from the United States, she found inspiration for her latest CD in her new land.

"Stone and Steel is an album inspired by Israel. It's based on very old tunes and very old songs, such as baroque and Renaissance music – even some Gregorian chants and Elizabethan songs that we've interpreted in a modern esthetic with classical roots," said Reiko Cooper over the phone from her home in Tel Aviv.

"When I converted and married my husband, [investment banker Leonard Rosen] we could have continued working in New York, but we wanted to live in Israel to get the full Jewish experience. It's different than converting and staying in New York… In Israel, we are experiencing it full throttle," she said.

Stone and Steel features Reiko Cooper on her 1786 William Forster cello, with piano and percussion accompaniment. The CD, which includes works by 17th-century composers Henry Purcell and John Dowland, has classical roots. The music, however, has been reworked with contemporary jazz arrangements by Kenji Bunch, who was heralded as "a composer to watch" by the New York Times, and award-winning composer and saxophonist Patrick Zimmerli.

Kristina Reiko Cooper

Born into a family of musicians – her father, Rex Cooper, is a pianist and professor at Pacific University in Oregon; her mother, Mutsuko Tatman, is a violinist with the Phoenix Opera and the Tucson Symphony; her grandfather was a composer, and her grandmother was an opera singer – it was natural for her to start playing piano at five. She then learned the violin and flute at 10.

The following year, during her father's sabbatical in Paris, the cello became the focus of Reiko Cooper's life.

"We found a cello teacher who was incredible, and I improved so much that my parents wanted me to stay on when my father's sabbatical ended," she said.

When her living arrangements with a Parisian family fell through, Reiko Cooper lived on her own, went to school and continued her music studies in Paris.

"I wouldn't recommend it to others, but when I was 12, I thought I was much older and more mature. I think I lived on baguettes and Nutella that year," she said, laughing.

With a doctorate from Juilliard School, Reiko Cooper is a visiting professor at Jerusalem's Hebrew University and the co-music director of the Israel Chamber Musjc Society. She plays with the eclectic trio Intersection and the contemporary music group Gontinuum.

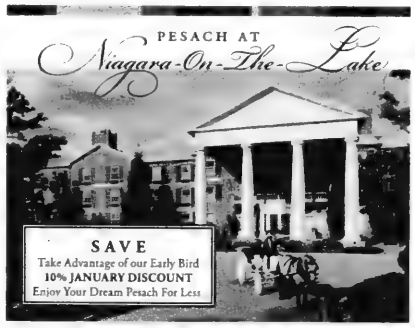
Reiko Cooper has appeared all over the world and played with the Prague Chamber Orchestra, the Osaka Symphony and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, among others.

Reiko Cooper and klezmer clarinettist Giora Feidman will première a double concerto, written for them by Georgian Israeli composer Yosef Bardanashvili, in Israel and New York next season.

Has the country inspired her to play Israeli music? "That's my next album. I'm already talking to different composers and arrangers. There will be the same grouping – piano and percussion, and maybe we'll add some ethnic instruments. I run into a lot of fine musicians in Israel," she said.

Reiko Cooper will perform in Toronto on March 20, in the lobby of the Classical 96.3 building at 550 Queen St. E. and on March 21 at the Glenn Gould Studio, opening for Quartetto Gelato.

Stone and Steel is available through the Linus Record website, Amazon.ca and iTunes. Reiko Cooper's website address is www.kristinareikocooper.com.



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Stories told against backdrop of Israeli-Palestinian drama

By ELIAS LEVY
Staff Reporter

Cult figure – the French author of some 50 novels translated into 60 languages, and the winner of this year's Nobel Prize in Literature – was in Quebec City this fall as part of the international jury for the Five-Continent Literary Prize presented at the summit of La Francophonie.

The jury of 12 writers – chaired by Lise Bissonnette, chair of the National Library of Quebec – awarded this year's prize to Hubert Haddad, a Sephardi Jew of Tunisian origin, for his novel *Palestine* (Éditions Zulma).Haddad spoke about *Palestine* at a literary gathering at the Olivieri bookstore in Côte-des Neiges.

Nobel-prize winning French writer Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio, left, with Hubert Haddad, the author of *Palestine*, which won this year's Francophonie literary prize.

The novel tells the story of Cham, a young Israeli soldier with amnesia and no identification papers, who is taken in by a Palestinian family.

They think he is the sole survivor of a Palestinian commando squad. The blind mother, Asmahane, is the widow of a Palestinian political figure killed in an Israel Defence Forces ambush. Since the disappearance of her son, Nessim, she has been living alone with her daughter Falastin, a frail student. They decide to pass Cham off as Nessim.

The Israeli amnesiac thus comes to know the harsh conditions under which the Palestinians in the West Bank live, and the identity switch enables Haddad to show the similarities between the two enemy nations and to denounce the absurdity of the never-ending war between them.

Le Clézio said during the discussion that he was "seduced by the beauty and the power" of the novel.

"*Palestine* is a very strong book with a contemporary drama that resonates with everyone: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," he said.

"What's amazing about Haddad's novel is that he doesn't take sides. The book doesn't give only one version of the facts. Rather, it brings to life from within the complications and complexities of the drama.

Le Clézio noted that the change of identity gives the novel "an element of the fantastical," but added that the Israeli-Palestinian drama is a political matter for which there is no foreseeable solution.

"It's a very serious question because it is costing many lives in both camps. Both Palestinians and Israelis have committed cruel and horrible acts… But, in my opinion, Haddad's novel brings hope. Putting yourself in the place of another may be the beginning of a solution – not a political one, but simply one that is human and philosophical."

Le Clézio said that for him, Haddad's novel goes to the heart of the problem, which has existed in Palestine for more than a century: "Two peoples who are almost brothers, two Semitic peoples who live in the same land and who must find a way to get along.

"But the only way for these two opposing peoples to get along is for one to walk in the other's shoes. There is no other alternative. Starting with a fantastical theme, Haddad brilliantly tackles a human and philosophical problem…"

In 1992, Le Clézio published *Étoile errante*, a beautifully written novel that combines two people's stories – that of Esther, a young Jewish woman who escapes from the Nazis during World War II and immigrates to Israel after the war, and that of Nejma, a young Palestinian refugee who leaves her country in 1948, when the State of Israel is founded.

The historic novel was not well-received in pro-Zionist Jewish circles, where Le Clézio was criticized for establishing a deceptive parallel between the unspeakable slaughter of the Holocaust and the exodus of the Palestinian people from their native land.

In 1988, Le Clézio published a novella in the militant *Revue d'Études palestiniennes*, in which he clearly showed his pro-Palestinian sympathies, thus arousing the anger of several Jewish intellectuals.

During the Francophonie meeting in Quebec, Le Clézio discussed his motivation in writing *Étoile errante* and expressed some personal opinions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In the spring of 1943, a small village on the outskirts of Nice was transformed into a ghetto by Italian occupiers. A few weeks later, the Germans brought the entire Jewish population into the sealed-off area, Le Clézio said.

"My mother knew about this, but I was only a little boy. Years later, she spoke to me about it at some length. She also told me of events that are not discussed in history books. The Jews of that little village were savagely persecuted and then taken to a field and shot by the German army. I went to see that field. Then I wanted to write about this tragic story because it seemed to me that the Palestinian drama also had its roots far in the past.

"In fact, while traversing that dark field of memory, I realized that the death of those Jews shot in such a cowardly way by the Germans in that corner of Nice would in some way be a forerunner of everything that came after."

While writing *Étoile errante*, Le Clézio discovered "the extent of the drama of the Palestinian refugees" by reading journals from the time of the first Arab-Israeli war.

"I read about everything that happened in Palestine in 1947 and 1948. I learned how the Palestinian population was deported: the people on the roads… how people waited on the beach, not knowing where to go; the rumours that circulated about settling accounts, about massacres, about extortion… The result was that the Palestinian Arabs gradually fled. When I wrote *Étoile errante*, the first Palestinian intifadah was at its height. Since then, the situation in Palestine has deteriorated a great deal."

Le Clézio is quite pessimistic about the possibility of a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict any time soon.

"When I was writing *Étoile errante*, I thought that, sooner or later, there would be a political accord between the Israelis and the Palestinians, that Jerusalem would perhaps become a city under an international mandate – that is, a city that would be presented to the world as a model of coexistence and the possibility of reconciliation. It didn't happen. I don't know if it will ever happen… I am afraid that this perpetual conflict might become an all-out war that will go on until both peoples are virtually destroyed.

This is an abridged version of an article that appeared in French in the Montreal edition of The CJN. Translation by Carolan Halpern.

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CJN Profile

Award-winning novelist raised in Liverpool 'shtetl'

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Clothes are more important than you think, says British novelist Linda Grant, whose forthcoming novel, The Thoughtful Dresser, celebrates the pleasures of sartorial adornment.

In her view, clothes should be seen as the most personal, yet public expression of identity. "The idea that clothes are irrelevant in how a person is perceived is a denial in how reality works," observed Grant, who was in Toronto recently to attend the International Festival of Authors at Harbourfront.

An award-winning novelist who holds dual British and Canadian citizenship, she makes no secret of the fact that apparel gives her great pleasure and that she likes shopping. "There's never been a time when I wasn't interested in clothes," said Grant, whose wardrobe is more than merely modest.

Grant, who acquired Canadian citizenship after living in this country from 1976 to 1984, suggested that she learned the value and importance of clothes from her grandmother, an eastern European Jew who arrived in Britain in 1900. In a class-ridden society, she understood almost immediately that you can create a favourable impression on the basis of your appearance.

"There's been a lot of writing about clothes," said Grant, whose current novel, The Clothes on Their Back, is a story of survival that unfolds against the backdrop of 1970s London.

Writers from Geoffrey Chaucer to Marcel Proust have highlighted clothes in their respective works, she commented. "It's an element in serious fiction."

The Clothes on Their Back – which is about a sensitive, bookish Jewish girl who grows up sealed off from both the past and the present – was short-listed for the 2008 Man Booker Prize.

The award was won by Aravind Adiga for The White Tiger, but Grant claims she was not disappointed. "I went into it with no expectations of winning," she said in an interview. "I was very glad to be on the short list."

Grant – whose novel, When I Lived in Modern Times, was the winner of the 2000 Orange Prize for fiction – regards awards as a double-edged sword. "They raise your profile and give you greater sales. But the downside is that you have to spend a lot of time doing public relations, which takes away from your writing time."

Usually, Grant spends mornings writing and the rest of the day thinking. "Your mind is always running, escaping into your imagination."

Inspiration may be slow to surface. "Sometimes, you write all morning, only to throw it away. If it comes too easily, it doesn't mean it's good."

A former journalist on the staff of the Guardian, she wrote her first novel, The Cast Iron Shore, in 1996, three years after her first book, Sexing the Millennium: A Political History of the Sexual Revolution, appeared.

After The Cast Iron Shore, the novel of which she is most fond, she wrote Remind Me Who I Am, an account of her mother's decline into dementia and the role that memory plays in creating a family history.

Grant wrote When I Lived in Modern Times – a coming of age story of a woman coping with her identity and of a country struggling to be born – after completing an assignment on Israel's 50th anniversary for the Guardian.

Set in 1946, on the eve of the end of the British Mandate in Palestine, the novel's chief protagonist is a 20-year-old Jewish hairdresser who settles in Tel Aviv after finding the kibbutz unpalatable.

Grant was drawn to the topic for a number of reasons. "It was a very extraordinary time in the world," she explained. "The British empire was ending. Refugees were returning to their homes. New countries were coming into existence."

Grant was inspired to write it after wandering the streets of Tel Aviv and speaking to Israelis who lived through that momentous period.

It did not require much research. "I read back issues of the Palestine Post. I was looking for stuff that big history books don't reveal: the coverage of British football matches, ads for hairdressing salons, and the like."

Linda Grant

[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

Grant's third novel, Still Here, a tale of two middle-aged people trying to come to terms with their respective pasts, was published two years after I Lived in Modern Times.

In 2006, her non-fiction work, On the Street: A Writer's View of Israel, for which she won the Lettre Ulysses Prize for Literary Reportage, was published.

She described it as a non-political account about Israel. "I wanted to get beyond words like 'Zionism' and 'Zionists.' I wanted to humanize the Arab-Israeli conflict."

Asked whether she considers herself a Zionist, Grant replied, "I came to the conclusion that it would be inconceivable not to support Israel's existence. It's a place with people, not just an idea."

She is less than confident that the Arab-Israeli dispute can be defused any time soon. "It will be very, very difficult to resolve. It would require very wise governments and political leaders in the Knesset, Ramallah and the White House. We don't have any of that, though I have hopes in [Israeli Foreign Minister] Tzipi Livni and [U.S. president-elect] Barack Obama."

Israel forms a component of Grant's secular Jewish identity. Born in Liverpool in 1951, she was raised in a traditional home where Yiddish was spoken and the laws of kashruth were taken seriously.

"Liverpool had a small but strong Jewish community that originated in eastern Europe," she recalled. "You knew everyone. It was like a shtetl. On the whole, everyone worked in the shmatte trade. It was a homogenous community that gave you a powerful identity and shaped your world. It had nothing to do with religion and politics."

Due to a serious recession in Britain, Grant went to Canada to complete her education. Having graduated with a BA degree in English from the University of York in Britain, she finished an MA at McMaster University in Hamilton. She did her post-graduate studies at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver.

After returning to Britain, Grant worked for the Guardian as a feature writer, reporting from, among other countries, the Czech Republic, Poland and Kosovo.

She enjoyed journalism, but seeking greater challenges, she turned her attention to to book writing. She had no trouble making the transition. As she put it, "You don't have to rely on facts, and you can make it up."

These days, Grant rarely dabbles in journalism. Yet she misses it. "It's enjoyable and gets you out of the house."

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Coast to Coast

Winnipeg federation trains future leaders

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Twenty-four of this city's future Jewish leaders recently gathered at the Asper Jewish Community Campus to learn about the responsibilities of being members of a board.

This was the third in a series of monthly sessions for the young adults who are participating in Boardwalking, a new leadership training program of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg that is being supported by the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba.

"Over the past few years, board membership in Jewish organizations have become more accessible to young adults in our community," said Judi Price-Rosen, the director of federation's Next Generation Initiatives.

"While this is an encouraging trend, it was apparent that these young leaders are not being given adequate training for their new roles… Boardwalking aims to cultivate a group of educated, informed and inspired young adults who will not simply 'sit' on boards, but will transform them.

"With fresh, innovative ideas and perspectives, Boardwalking graduates will not only enhance their sponsoring organizations, but also their leadership will strengthen the Winnipeg Jewish community as a whole," Price-Rosen said.

The year-long program kicked off in early October with a four-hour bus tour of the old Jewish sites of north Winnipeg. The tour was led by David Cohen, the former executive director of the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba.

"The tour was awesome," said young businessman Gavin Rich (of Richlu Manufacturing), who has recently joined the board of the Technion Society. "It gave us a real sense of our roots."

The second program – in early November – was facilitated by Michael Brooks, the executive director of the University of Michigan Hillel. He shared some ideas about how to create a more vibrant Jewish culture.

The teacher-facilitator for the Dec. 2 program was Debbie Stein, the director of learning and development of the Mandel Center for Leadership Excellence at United Jewish Communities (UJC). She is responsible for programs and services designed to educate and train professional and volunteer leadership for the federation system.

During her presentation, Stein gave her listeners recommendations that would make them more effective board members. "You need to understand your organization's mission and demonstrate a commitment to that mission," she said. "You need to keep informed about issues."

She encouraged her young listeners to share their views and ask questions at meetings, as well as recommending that they make sure their boards have insurance protecting members from liability and lawsuits.

"This [Boardwalking] is a wonderful program," said Steven Hyman, who is a member of the Rady Jewish Community Centre board. "It is nice to have a training program like this for those of us who are new to boards."

Carrie Ransby, who is on the board of B'nai Brith Camp, said, "It is great to see all of us younger people together here wanting to learn what is involved in being members of boards."

Stein said that she was "blown away by the calibre of the young people participating in the Boardwalking program.

"I was particularly impressed by the large number of men here. I have led a large number of similar programs throughout the United States and rarely are there any men participating."

RAGIN' CAJUN SPEAKS: Supporters of Israel's Shaare Zedek Medical Center recently gathered at the Park Hyatt Toronto to celebrate "The Next 60 Years." The event featured Liberal MP Bob Rae, centre, as MC and keynote speaker "the Ragin' Cajun," James Carville, left, the campaign manager for former U.S. president Bill Clinton. Pictured with Carville and Rae, from left, are Jonathan Solursh, president of the Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation's board of directors; Shaare Zedek's director general, Jonathan Halevy, and event chair Paul Weinberg.

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CHAT vs. CHAT in Israel Becker final

By ELI SHUPAK
Special to The CJN

It took an MVP performance from Amy Sherman to settle bragging rights as the two campuses of the The Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto (TanenbaumCHAT) recently hooked up in the championship game of the 13th annual Israel Becker Tournament.

Sherman's 17 points led the Wallenberg campus to a 38-30 overtime victory over their northern Kimel foes in the basketball tournament final.

It was the third meeting in a week for the two teams. The Kimel girls won a round-robin meeting 49-38 earlier in the week and had defeated Wallenberg in overtime a few days earlier at the school's Alumni Cup tournament.

Both CHAT teams were joined by Gann Academy of Boston atop the standings with a 3-1 record following round-robin play. Wallenberg advanced to the championship game by knocking off the defending champions from Boston 26-23 in one semifinal, while Kimel moved on by beating Gray Academy from Winnipeg, 39-30, in the other final four matchup.

Laura Wilchesky joined Sherman on the first all-star team, along with Kimel's Elise Kovac.

Julia Kovac, Laura Elman and Maddy Venn-Mitchell of Wallenberg were second-team all-stars.

Ramaz, a New York school easily defended the boys title, defeating Toronto's Yeshivat Or Chaim 61-44 in the championship game. Ramaz won its six games in the event by an average of 21 points, with only Kimel staying within single digits of them, falling by nine.

Or Chaim was somewhat more competitive this year against the New Yorkers, having lost to them 69-20 in last year's semifinal. They advanced to this year's final, squeaking by Wallenberg, 38-37.

Yadin Koschitzky, in blue at left, drives to the basket against Gray Academy player while above, two teens mark Havdalah prior to Saturday night games at the tournament.

[*Avraham A. Witty photos*]

Mike Berg of Ramaz was named tournament MVP, while Or Chaim's Eli Herskovitz, Eden Kadish from Wallenberg, and Kimel's Cory Capland were first-team all-stars. Yonah Dorfman of Or Chaim was named to the second team.

Or Chaim's Akiva Maresky and Kimel's Sarah Edgerley won the tournament's sportsmanship awards.

The TanenbaumCHAT band and school mascot entertained those in attendance at the Kimel campus, while Rogers Cable 10 showed up on opening night and filmed a segment that aired the following day.

TanenbaumCHAT hopes to provide live audio streaming of tournament games next year.

The five-day event is held in memory of former TanenbaumCHAT student Israel Becker, who was killed in a car accident in 1994.

Players are housed around the Beth Avraham Yoseph Synagogue of Toronto and take part in programs to bond over Shabbat, while attending services and sharing meals.

"We talk about sports, leadership and Judaism," said Zev Steinfeld, a Jewish studies teacher and assistant basketball coach with the senior girls team at Kimel. "We broke them into small groups, which had kids from each team, so that they could get a chance to hang out and meet each other. I think they made a lot of friends and were able to take a lot away from the experience."

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Who's got snowballs?

ALMOST FAMOUS

BY JACOB MEDJUCK

Hi Vancouver. How's your winter going? What's that? It snowed last week? How many inches? Two inches? That's a natural disaster. Close down city transit! (Often times, they do.)

This city is generally a coastal Shangri La. At least it was when I arrived in the '90s. But global warming wrecked everything. Tropical B.C. winters at 10 degrees celsius used to have me gloating. Now I wear a toque. And it's more than a fashion disappointment.

For eight years, it never snowed here. Then in 2006, the devil's white rain came down like a plague. At first, everyone was in awe, a town of snowflakes and flake-bedazzled idiots. But I wasn't fooled. Snow is only romantic when it's falling. After that, it becomes a chore – a wet, icy chore.

Having been an underage worker for years in winter's wet workforce, I wasn't festive when snow came to Vancouver. I was terrified.

I wasn't alone in my fear. I received a panicked call that winter from a B.C.-born babe who was driving down Oak Street and spinning out of control. She blurted, "How do I stop? How do I turn! I'll die out here tonight. We're all going to die tonight."

I looked outside. An inch of snow had fallen, and it was already starting to melt. I'd received the call because I was from the East Coast – the real East Coast, not Toronto. (P.S. 96 per cent of Vancouver-born residents think the East Coast is Toronto, that Montreal is it's own country, and that Newfoundland is a TV show. Also, in that universe, Halifax is part of Boston.)

The call came to me because Young Drivers of Nova Scotia requires its students to take a stunt-driving test on a frozen lake (at least it did when I was learning to drive), and I'd boasted about this fact since arriving here.

So I had to handle the careening vehicle. "Pump the breaks. Turn away from the spin," I offered, saving the day from my sofa.

Let me tell you what snow is – unless you live on the Prairies, in which case, you can tell me. (Even then, Winnipeg may beat the East Coast on cold, but snow? Tough call.) For the first half of my life, I lived in Halifax. For the last half, I've lived in Vancouver. Sandwiched in the middle were a few years in Ontario. (Even I thought Montreal was a separate country.)

I live in British Columbia now, and I love B.C. rain. The people in Vancouver who complain about the rain didn't have to shovel snow growing up. In Halifax, on the rare days that they didn't cancel school because of a snowfall, I often missed half my classes anyway plowed in at home, shovelling the walkway so we could get our car out of its winter ice cast.

In Moncton, we had to dig my Bubbi out of her house through a window, as if she lived in a two-storey igloo.

Snow, Vancouver, is not measured in inches or feet, but metres. Anything less is frost. Vancouver gets frost.

And traffic. We get traffic. For the 2010 Winter Olympics, we'll have no snow, but we will have athletes stuck in traffic on their way to events, only to find out when they arrive that we don't have the right temperature or precipitation levels to host winter sporting events. That will be hilarious, and it will highlight Canadians' renowned sense of humour.

How did we end up with the snowy side while the States scored desert? Whoever flipped that U.S.-Canada coin cheated – unless Hashem, in his infinite wisdom, is making up for time served in Sinai and this is some perverse reward.

Where's Lot's wife now, when my driveway needs traction?

I was just watching some birds fly south in customary V formation. That's all the GPS I need. Let's regroup in Vegas.

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FITNESS CORNER

BY FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

Happy Anniversary! Can you believe it? It's been a year already since I started writing this column. I know that over the last year, you have become leaner, fitter, stronger and a little smarter when it comes to your health. Over the past 12 months, we've discussed how to get started on a workout regime; what you would need to get started at home; the importance of producing muscle mass, daily cardio, stretching after a workout, taking care of injuries, proper sleep and stress reduction, and, of course, the need for water while exercising. We've also talked about how to keep motivated and have fun, so that you can keep going and reach your goals.

What's next? Where do we go from here? I'm glad you asked that. First things first: you must re-evaluate your goals. Did you succeed? Did you fail? Why? The start of a new year is a great time to make new goals or revamp old ones. Make sure you're realistic, so that this year you'll not only reach your goals but surpass them.

Getting fit is a lifelong process, and it not only takes time, it also takes a plan. Once you have a plan, you need to put it into action. Once you've put that plan into action, you need to stick to it. Consistency is the name of the game.

This year, I'd like to help you understand how to intensify your workouts, as well as how to achieve the next level of fitness, how to safely get back into sports or fitness after injury, how daily cardio has lifelong benefits (beyond weight loss), and about how a positive attitude helps you more than you think.

How you look at food also plays a large role in your weight loss and fitness goals. We'll dive into that issue next month.

If you have questions or would like to learn more, e-mail me at felycesfitness@rogers.com.

L'ailah: it's OK

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

A friend of mine was going through days of deep sadness. I asked her if she would speak to me while she suffered, if she would loan her feelings and thoughts to a column. She agreed, recognizing that the interview would be cleansing for her, and that for readers, it would be a window into the mind of a stranger, of another human being.

My friend figured that giving others the chance to peer through the porthole of her feelings might ease other people's burdens. Her words remind us that we're not alone in our personal battles. Reading this is akin to learning about a biblical character such as Jacob, whose struggle with the angel taught us about facing existential angst.

We'll call my friend L'ailah. She is in her mid-30s and highly accomplished in her work counselling prisoners, many of whom are lifers. L'ailah is quite remarkable.

She told me, "Yes, lately I'm feeling sad, a general hopelessness, and it's compounded because there is the guilt of 'Why I can't get my s--t together. Why can't I be happy?'

"Everything feels like an effort. You know that feeling where the whole thing is so much work, even getting out of bed in the morning? How am I going to get through the next 40 years?"

L'ailah told me there are many people who love and support her, but nobody can make her feel better when she's depressed. That load is hers to carry.

"I worry about burdening other people with my sadness. My friends and family want to fix things, and when they can't, it makes them feel bad. For me, it's easier to pretend everything is OK.

"My sadness and despair sometimes make me feel as though I literally have a weight on my head pushing me down. I can't move. I will realize that I have been sitting perfectly still, staring at nothing for an hour or longer, as though I'm frozen."

I asked her what images and memories come to mind when she feels this way.

"Even when I was a kid, I remember feeling a lot of anxiety – you know that feeling, not knowing where you fit?

"I was an only child and spent a lot of time with my parents' friends. I wanted their approval. I remember watching adult behaviours and thinking if I could emulate them, I would be a successful human being. Other kids didn't know how to deal with me. I went on a school trip when I was 12 and someone thought I was the teacher. I never had friends my age. I wasn't an adult and I wasn't a kid."

L'ailah told me appearances meant "everything" to her mom. (L'ailah has a less complex relationship with her father, one that's very loving and less judgmental. She describes him as somewhat overbearing, but it's "more like a kitten licking you to death.")

"I was always well behaved. My mom delighted in telling me stories of how they would take me to restaurants and I never had tantrums. I was quiet, often invisible. This made her happy.

"A long time ago, I tried to kill myself. My mother said, 'What are people going to think of us?' I know my mother loves me, but I think she saw me as an extension of herself, and my sadness as a negative reflection of her parenting skills. She couldn't see me as my own person, separate from her."

We're not alone in our thoughts and feelings, or at least not as isolated as we think. The truth is, we are L'ailah. It's OK.

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This Week

Special Report

Awareness, funding needed to fight mental illness. *Page 3*

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Chabad opens new building *Page 13*

Arts & Travel

Pregnancy has its funny side, playwright says. *Page 30*

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Swimming with an Olympic gold medalist.

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Invasion aims to destroy Hamas' terrorist infrastructure

By MARCY OSTER
JTA

KARNEI SHOMRON, West Bank — At least 50 Hamas terrorists have been killed since Israeli forces entered the Gaza Strip, beginning the long-anticipated ground phase of Operation Cast Lead.

An Israeli soldier died Sunday afternoon, several hours after being critically injured along with another soldier in a mortar attack near Jabalya. Four other soldiers suffered minor gunshot wounds Sunday night.

More than 30 Israeli soldiers have been injured, two seriously, since the ground invasion began Saturday night with a column of troops marching into northern Gaza following a day of heavy Israeli shelling near the border with artillery cannons.

The ground invasion began a week after the start of the Gaza operation, which until Saturday consisted of targeted air strikes on Hamas infrastructure, including rocket launchers, caches of weapons, weapons labs and training camps.

Operation Cast Lead was launched Dec. 27, after several days of intense Palestinian rocket fire on Israeli towns, following the expiration of a six-month ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

At the opening of the weekly cabinet meeting Sunday, held at the Kirya army base in Tel Aviv in order to accommodate top army leaders, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert addressed the families of the Israeli soldiers who had been sent into battle less than 24 hours before.

Israeli troops make final preparations for their entry into Gaza on Saturday night.
[Isranet photo]

"I have thought about you a lot since the operation began, especially since the decision about a ground operation approached," he said.

Continued on page 29

Ottawa backs Israel despite protests

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian demonstrators continued to turn out on the streets of the country's major urban centres over the weekend in response to Israel's new ground assault on Gaza, but the Harper government reiterated its support for the Jewish state's military operation.

Hundreds of pro-Palestinian demonstrators in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and elsewhere renewed calls for Israel to cease its military operation – dubbed "Cast Lead" by the Israel Defence Forces and which began with an Israeli Air Force bombing campaign on Dec. 27 – while pro-Israel counter-protesters, most of whom were organized by the Jewish Defence League (JDL) in Toronto, sought to bring Israel's reasons for the attack to the fore.

Despite the protests, on Sunday, Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon issued a statement regarding Canada's position on the conflict.

It expressed concern over the "increase in hostilities" and urged renewed diplomatic efforts to ensure a "sustainable and durable ceasefire, starting with the halting of all rocket attacks on Israel. Canada maintains that the rocket attacks are the cause of this crisis."

In Toronto, close to 1,000 protesters gathered in the downtown core and marched from Dundas Square to the front of the Israeli consulate on Bloor Street.

Continued on page 22

Vayechi
Candlelighting: 4:42
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Greater Toronto Area

Israel treats wounded Palestinians – please see page 28

The News in Brief

CANADA

Matas Named To OC

WINNIPEG — Winnipeg lawyer David Matas has been appointed a member of the Order of Canada, the country's highest civilian honour. Matas was recognized for his contributions to human rights legislation as well as to immigration and refugee law. He was one of 42 new appointees to the Order. Peter Munk was promoted within the Order to companion from officer for his contributions as an entrepreneur and philanthropist, and Paul Garfinkel was promoted to officer from member for his contributions in the field of mental health.

Halt Hostilities

TORONTO — Canadian Friends of Peace Now called upon Israel and Hamas to halt hostilities and begin indirect negotiations to renew their expired six-month ceasefire in order to avoid further civilian deaths on both sides of the Gaza border.

WORLD

On Guard

WASHINGTON — A group co-ordinating security for American Jewish institutions urged member organizations to review their security procedures in the wake of Israel's operation in Gaza. The Secure Community Network sent a memo to its dozens of member organizations, including Jewish federations around the country, advising them to take a close look at their security infrastructure, keep in close touch with local law enforcement officials and be aware of possible demonstrations in their area.

Hate Crime

WASHINGTON — A Molotov cocktail was thrown at Temple Sholom of Chicago, causing a small fire in a fenced-in playground. No one was hurt in the firebomb attack. The incident is being investigated as a hate crime.

Doves Speak

WASHINGTON — Four dovish pro-Israel groups criticized Israel's air strikes in Gaza and called for U.S. efforts to end the violence. J Street, Americans for Peace Now, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom and Israel Policy Forum all defended Israel's right to strike Hamas installations in Gaza, but said such actions would be counterproductive and damage Israel's security in the long run. They all also called for renewal of a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

Tough Talk

PRAGUE — The Czech Republic, which took over the European Union's presidency from France on Jan. 1, defended Israel's strikes against Hamas. The EU has called for a ceasefire to end the violence, but Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg, blaming Hamas for escalating the conflict after a ceasefire ended Dec. 19, said Israel had the right to defend itself. Schwarzenberg said Hamas had excluded itself from serious political debate as a result of its rocket attacks on Israel and he criticized the group for putting its bases and gun warehouses in densely populated areas.

Pot Calls Kettle Black

TEHRAN — Iran has set up a court in Tehran to try Israelis for "genocide against humanity" committed in Gaza. Israelis can be tried in absentia in the court, which was set up on the basis of a 1948 UN convention on the prevention of genocide to which Iran is a signatory, an Iranian judiciary spokesman said, Reuters reported. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said his country would ask the International Criminal Court to try Israeli leaders for war crimes.

Pinter Dies

LONDON — Harold Pinter, a Nobel Prize-winning British playwright, has died at the age of 78. Pinter was called "the foremost representative of British drama in the second half of the 20th century" by the committee that awarded him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005. The son of a Jewish tailor of Hungarian descent, Pinter was born in East London. He began his career as an actor and later became a playwright and screenwriter. His well-known plays include The Birthday Party and No Man's Land, while his movie credits include The Quiller Memorandum and The French Lieutenant's Woman. Pinter was a vociferous critic of the war in Iraq, using his prerecorded Nobel lecture to denounce U.S. President George W. Bush and then-British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Holocaust Memoir Release Cancelled

WASHINGTON — A New York publisher has cancelled the release of a Holocaust memoir after learning the core of the story was fabricated. Berkley Books, a division of Penguin Group, also demanded that Herman Rosenblat return his advance.

Rosenblat claimed a woman he met on a blind date in New York 12 years after World War II and later married was the same person who, as a Jewish child in hiding during the Holocaust, disguised herself as a Christian farm girl and tossed apples to him over the fence of a sub-camp of Buchenwald. While Rosenblat was interred at the Schlieben concentration camp, his wife did not toss apples to him, a scholar discovered.

"I wanted to bring happiness to people, to remind them not to hate, but to love and tolerate all people," he wrote in a statement published in the New York Times. "I brought good feelings to a lot of people and I brought hope to many. My motivation was to make good in this world. In my dreams, Roma will always throw me an apple, but I now know it is only a dream."

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Awareness, funding needed to fight mental illnesses

Part 2 of this three-part series appeared in The CJN Jan. 1. It examined the limited number of Jewish resources available for patients with mental health difficulties and the pressure felt by the few Jewish organizations in the Greater Toronto Area, which are overwhelmed by the demand for services.

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Special Report
Part 3 of 3

Sufficient funding to enable Jewish agencies to address the needs of people in the community who have mental illnesses is crucial, said Jack Kugelmass, a social worker in the Jewish community.

"We really need to educate our community like any other community about mental illness," he said.

"John," who spoke to The CJN on the condition of anonymity about his frustrations concerning his Holocaust survivor parents who have been caring for his schizophrenic adult brother for his entire life, pointed to the way JACS (Jewish alcoholics, chemically dependent persons and significant-others) created a campaign that broke down the misconceptions that Jews don't suffer from addiction. John said a similar campaign to enlighten people about the existence of mental illness among Jews is also needed.

"We need a campaign to say that there are people who suffer within the community and [present] what resources are available – if there are any," John said.

"I think that if the parents and families themselves would meet others and share experiences, they would benefit from that. They would know that they are not suffering alone."

Devora Schwartz Waxman, the Family Caregiver Connections co-ordinator at Circle of Care, a non-profit provider of in-home health and support services said, "When caregivers call me and they need respite, they need a break. It would be great if I could suggest a place within the Jewish community where their kids could go."

Rochelle Goldman-Brown

Rochelle Goldman-Brown, the director of Chai Tikvah Foundation, which runs a kosher group home in the city, said there have been support groups for family members for years, but only for family members of clients.

"I think somewhere down the road we're going to look at expanding that to people in the community at large. People often feel very alone with this. It's just a way for people to get together with others who suffer from the same problem," Goldman-Brown said.

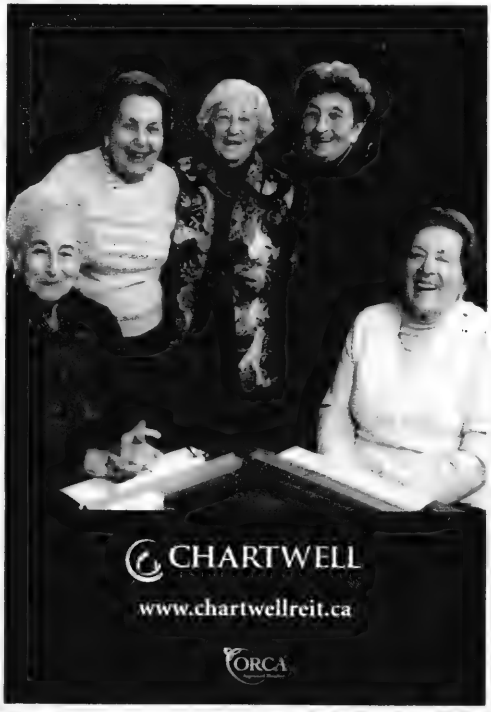
She added that they have also begun to write letters to rabbis of the congregations in the GTA asking them to speak about the issue from the pulpit and to include information about mental health issues in their bulletins.

"We need to think of ways to link families together, to create opportunities for people who are fairly high functioning and living at home to have broader social outlets within the Jewish community," Kugelmass said.

"I'm talking about programming specific to the needs of young Jewish men and women who are tied to Jewish values. It needs to be discussed in our institutions and they should ask themselves, 'How can we give them a voice?'"

"Rachel," who also spoke to The CJN on condition of anonymity to protect the identity of her schizophrenic son who is a Chai Tikvah resident, said the Jewish community simply hasn't done enough to address the issue.

Continued on page12



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Free, but unhelpful advice

From the editor's desk...

Nothing stirs newspaper editors in their opinion-offering roles more excitedly than Israel's conflict with the Palestinians. In a time of war of course, such as this, when Israel actually fights back, striking hard blows at the enemy, the editors' collective excitement transmutes to a kind of frenzied group zeal.

This phenomenon has been much on display in daily newspapers around the world.

But much of the material, analysis, and opinion that editors have chosen to feature on the editorial and commentary pages have been, like most free advice, off-the-mark and unhelpful.

Last Saturday's Globe and Mail, to take but one newspaper example, published two large commentaries on Israel's incursion into Gaza that were not only unhelpful, but also contradictory.

Patrick Martin, the paper's Israel-based bureau chief, wrote, ostensibly, a mini-primer about Hamas. The piece was entitled "The Islamic movement that just won't die."

It was decidedly not a paean of tribute to the terrorist organization, but nor was it even a slightly serious look at the genocidal mission of the organization or at the murderous nature of its related activities.

For example, Martin quotes one of his interviewees at a mosque in Hebron as saying that "Hamas will adapt to circumstances." To prove the point, Martin provides the following history.

"They have in the past. About 2005-06, for example, it dawned on Hamas leaders that the group's suicide-bombing campaign was not winning them international support and they largely dropped it as a tactic, replacing it with other tactics such as rocket attacks."

To be fair, Martin was writing about Hamas' sense of pragmatism, not about its sense of Jew-destroying purpose.

But to glide past the suicide bombing and the rocket attacks as merely "tactics" in the fight against Israel is to perpetuate misconceptions about the nature of Hamas, about its conflict with Israel and about this latest fighting in particular.

At an earlier point in his essay, Martin wrote, "For 21 years, Hamas has endured imprisonment, assassinations, expulsion, boycott and siege, and it has grown in strength through it all. It has practised rock-throwing, drive-by shooting, kidnapping, suicide bombing and, most recently, rocket attacks."

Casually; with the equivalent of an editorial shrug of the shoulder, Martin simply rolls out the list of Hamas activities as one would roll out a list of activities for members of a local Kiwanis club.

His failure to spell out the ultimate truth of these activities – that they are blatant, deliberate, calculated acts of terror aimed solely and exclusively at harming, maiming and killing the Jews of Israel – is a profound, intellectually damaging, omission from his analysis.

Two pages later, in the same issue of the Globe and Mail, there was another large essay on the current situation titled "Pathless in Gaza." Written by Michael Bell, Canada's former ambassador to Israel, the Palestinian territories, Egypt and Jordan and currently the Paul Martin (Senior) Scholar in Diplomacy at the University of Windsor, it purports to demonstrate the futility of the current fighting and to prescribe a way to reach peace.

The tone of Bell's article, especially in terms of his observations and advice concerning Israel, was barbed, somewhat disdainful and quite smug. For example, at the very outset of the piece, he wrote, "Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed or injured, from toddlers to the aged. Television footage suggests almost all are innocents. Israeli spokesmen *dispute* that impression and speak in *frigid* terms of 'collateral damage'." [My emphasis.] The tone detracts from the piece, or rather, reveals another of its dimensions.

But Bell eventually makes an observation that must be read in head-scratching apposition to the observations, two pages earlier of Patrick Martin.

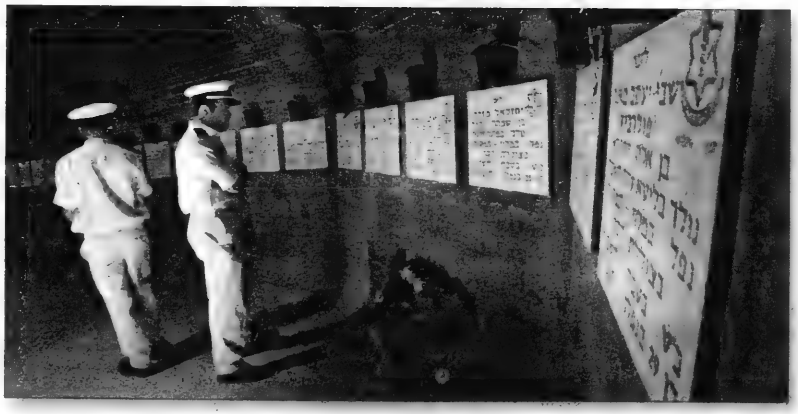
"Hamas is a radical, political-Islamic organization. There are those who think that bringing its leadership into dialogue and negotiation would facilitate concord and in the longer run pave the way to a comprehensive peace between Israel and Palestine. They suggest reconciliation between Hamas, on the one hand, and the Palestinian Authority and Fatah, on the other. There is, however, nothing to indicate this is possible... Hamas and Fatah are rivals for the ragged mantle of Palestine in both the West Bank and Gaza. Fissures run deep... These rivals will not work together, nor can Hamas, *which rejects the very concept of a Jewish state*, be trusted to negotiate in good faith." [My emphasis.] Bell concisely defines the problem in dealing with Hamas. They will not live alongside a Jewish state in the Middle East.

Then in a somewhat gaping non sequitur to the subject of the current fighting in Gaza, he explains what Israel must do to bring peace: "Moderates must be bolstered and empowered... to be seen by their populations to deliver basic aspirations."

The two things wrong with Bell's conclusion are: first, ever since 1993, at least, if not earlier, Israel, has been trying to do precisely that through its ongoing negotiations with the Palestinian Authority. Second, he places no burden whatsoever upon the Palestinian leaders he would regard as moderate to consider the relevance of Israeli aspirations to live in security and peace too.

Free advice, but not very helpful.

– *MBD*



MEMORIAL TO THE DAKAR: In January 1968, the Dakar, a refitted Israeli T-class submarine, left a shipyard in Scotland to conduct sea and dive trials. En route to Haifa, the Dakar disappeared. An international search was launched, but to no avail. In May 1999, an American team found the Dakar at a depth of some 300 metres in the Mediterranean Sea. Its conning tower had been snapped off, and by all accounts, the sub suffered a catastrophic hull rupture, drowning the entire crew. In 2000, the Dakar's bridge was raised, and it is now on display at Haifa's naval museum. This photo shows the memorial to the Dakar on Mt. Herzl in Jerusalem.

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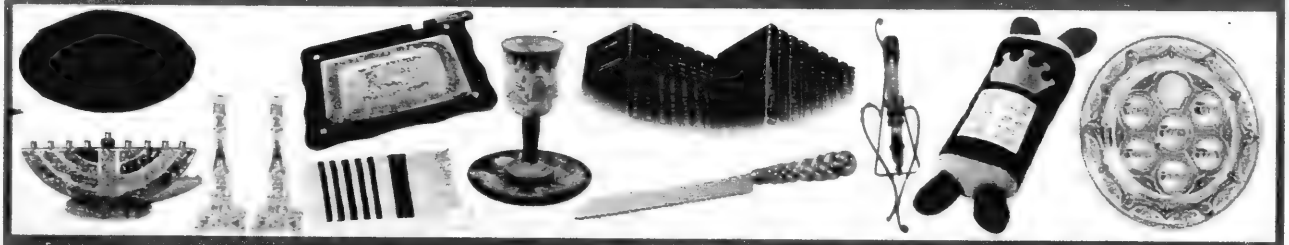

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Sephardi congregations considering merger

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

One of Toronto's earliest Sephardi congregations may merge with one of the city's largest Sephardi congregations.

Late last year, Congregation Petah Tikvah Anshei Castilla – founded in 1958 as the city's first Spanish-language Sephardi congregation – approached the Sephardic Kehila Centre's Abir Yaakob Congregation to discuss the possibility of a merger, says Maurice Benzacar, vice-president of the Kehila Centre.

In a recent interview, Benzacar confirmed to The CJN that the Kehila Centre has conducted a survey of its congregants to gauge reaction to the idea, and said the feedback so far has been "very positive. They want the merger."

Asked why a merger is necessary now, Benzacar said it would be "good" to combine his centre's congregation with that of Petah Tikvah.

Calls and e-mails from The CJN to Petah Tikvah were not returned.

A survey letter sent to Sephardic Kehila Centre congregants, dated Oct. 29, 2008, was obtained by The CJN.

In it, congregants are told that the merger is being considered because "the future growth and development of our synagogue and the Sephardic Kehila Centre is in question," and that the merger is just one of the strategies being looked at.

Benzacar did not provide details, saying only that Kehila Centre committee members are still "talking" with Petah Tikvah about a potential merger.

The letter also reassures members that "no decision will be entered into lightly and without due diligence." It then goes on to advise that if the attached survey questionnaire was not returned by Nov. 10, 2008, the Kehila Centre would "assume that you are in favour of the merger."

Benzacar said that any talk of finalizing a merger at this time is premature, and that even providing an update on talks between the congregations may "take awhile."

"We're talking to each other and nothing is definite. But we hope. It's a good thing to bring people together in the community under one roof," Benzacar said.

TWO CENTS FOR CHANGE: Jewish teens gathered recently to share their "two cents" on global issues. The workshop, titled Give your Two Cents, Get Back Change, was sponsored by BBYO and led by teens Sarah Katz and Eli Krapivnik. Issues discussed included poverty, global warming, education, immigration, equal rights, war and genocide.

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Carolyn Blackman
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Rally behind Israel

We have seen them before – most recently in 2002, after the Park Hotel massacre in Netanya when Israel sent its troops into Jenin and then, in 2006, during the Second Lebanon War – and we see them, alas, again today: incendiary, hysterical demonstrations against Israel.

Furious protesters flock to the streets in rabid indignation, offended that the Jewish state has deigned to strike back at those who seek its destruction. Lies, mistruths and calumnies are their slogans. Brazen, unveiled threats against Israel are their rallying cries.

"Free Palestine" was the most commonly chanted plea we heard and saw last week from demonstrations in Canada, the United States and Europe.

We know only too well what the code words "Free Palestine" really mean. When that sinister cry rises from the tumult of the protests, the demonstrators are unmasked. They might just as well be chanting "Destroy Israel" or "Kill the Jews."

At first we cringe. Then we seethe. Then we summon our resolve and courage not to surrender our ancient, sacred, life-affirming, people-defining aspirations to the terrorists and their apologists.

Since the very first moment it wrested control of Gaza from the Fatah-oriented Palestinian Authority, Hamas' sole national enterprise has been to harm Israel. Its every strategy and plan, including using Palestinian civilians as human shields and human weapons, have been dedicated to killing as many Jews as possible.

On Al-Aqsa television last year, Fathi Hamad, a Hamas official, eloquently, if not also ghoulishly, explained why it does so. "For the Palestinian people, death became an industry… Accordingly, [Palestinians] created a human shield of women, children, the elderly and the jihad fighters against the Zionist bombing machine, as if they were saying to the Zionist enemy: 'We desire death as you desire life.'"

But Hamas terror and violence today is also aimed at fellow Palestinians. A Hamas official in Gaza was reported to have said last weekend that his security forces had launched a massive "pre-emptive" campaign aimed at thwarting Fatah's attempts to "spread anarchy and chaos." The media reported that "sources close to Hamas revealed over the weekend that the movement had 'executed' more than 35 Palestinians who were suspected of collaborating with Israel and were being held in various Hamas security installations… At least 75 activists were shot in the legs, while others had their hands broken."

Community federations and other groups have organized rallies in support of Israel for tonight, Jan. 8, in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal.

Israel's war is a just one. The right of the people of Israel to live in peace and security, free from terror, is a just cause. Moreover, it is also our cause. It is, in fact, the cause of the entire free world.

As many of us as possible should attend these rallies.

25 years ago in The CJN

While the Bank of Israel warned about a mounting economic crisis and the government proposed slashing ministries' budgets by nine per cent, 6,000 government workers were either on strike, threatening to strike, or taking job action to demand higher pay or reinstitution of overtime pay or travel allowances. Much of the Israeli bureaucracy was said to be in turmoil.

Dry Bones
THE CHESS PLAYER
I GET MY HAMAS PUPPETS IN GAZA TO DROP THE "CEASE-FIRE" AND
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Left-wing bias in CJN

I am disappointed in your news coverage and reporting. Every time your reporters write an article contrary to what I can only conclude is the left-wing bias of your paper, you label the person being written about as a "hawk," or state that he or she has a "hawkish" attitude or is part of a right-wing organization. On the other hand, you never label those giving opinions that you seem to favour as left-wing or dovish.

The media, your publication included, no longer reports. Rather it gives its opinions and pushes its own agenda. Your paper is no different. Your article reporting on a speech by retired Israeli ambassador to Washington Yoram Ettinger was a prime example ("Retired Israeli ambassador mistrusts Obama," CJN, Dec. 11). At the start of the second paragraph, and presumably to discount as of possible value anything he has to say, you state that he writes a "hawkish" online newsletter. That is your writer's opinion. The former ambassador had a lot of thought-provoking things to say, but I wonder how many of your readers would agree, since he was labelled from the beginning as a hawk.

I would rather read a variety of viewpoints, without labels, and come to my own conclusions. Report incidents from a variety of positions, keeping to the facts. Cut your bias and your paper would be worth reading. Funny how most "liberals" are the first to name call and denigrate others' points of view.

Phyllis Johnston
Toronto

* * *

Anti-Semitism on campus

Rebecca Woods Baum, and Hillel, seem to be under the illusion that there is some neat surgical separation between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism ("Response to Hart (1)," CJN letters, Nov. 27). This reflects a basic failure to understand that although it is perfectly legitimate to criticize Israel according to standards that are applied to other countries, equating Zionism with criminality – as clearly occurs, for example, under the guise of Israeli Apartheid Week – is very much part of 21st-century anti-Semitism.

Further, Woods Baum somehow seems unable to understand that fighting such anti-Semitism on campus is not optional. It is a must if our students and faculty are to preserve their rights and human dignity. A head-in-the-sand approach, based on the hope that these frontal attacks on our community will fade away, is both unrealistic and, as history shows, ultimately irresponsible.

In addition, the insinuation by Woods Baum that those who wish to fight back are using our students as "pawns" is a dangerous distortion of campus reality. In a democracy, if Jewish students do not stand up for their rights against those who seek to dehumanize them by characterizing their support for Israel as part of an international criminal activity, are these students then not giving up the very citizenship and concomitant rights that we all strove so hard to achieve over so many decades? And, if Jewish community organizations do not support our students in this quest for rights and dignity, what exactly do they stand for?

Also, her notion that Hillel is being scapegoated seems to thoroughly obscure the responsibility of that organization. Given the extent of community funds that have been invested in Hillel and the large footprint that the latter has on campuses, it is odd that Hillel should think its responsibilities to our youth do not extend beyond wishful thinking that well-organized, vicious anti-Zionist campus groups will somehow disappear.

Furthermore, it is surely ludicrous to assume that joint pudding-making sessions with opponents and meaningless and directionless dialogues are a substitute for fighting courageously and effectively for the rights of Jewish students and faculty on Canadian campuses.

Monte Levy
Ancaster, Ont.

* * *

Conservative Jewish singles

The Canadian Council of Conservative Synagogues (CCCS) and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ) in Toronto face a number of challenges ("Breakaway group launches Conservative shul council," CJN, Nov. 20). But no challenge is perhaps more acute than that faced by Conservative single Jews desirous of meeting members of the opposite sex. And in this area, very little has been done to address such needs.

The Conservative movement, in this regard, might do well to copy the Orthodox movement in Toronto, which has developed a group known as Sasson V Simcha, composed of Orthodox rebbetzins who introduce Orthodox Jewish singles to one another. Sasson V Simcha's efforts have met some success.

Harvey Schiller and Paul Kochber of the CCCS and the USCJ respectively could bridge the differences of their groups in a collaborative way, if they could persuade Conservative rebbetzins to set up a group similar to Sasson V Simcha. At the same time, they would be doing a mitzvah in meeting the needs of their singles.

Charles Abshez
Toronto

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Perspectives

My son is fighting in Gaza

By YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

Israeli troops are seen making final preparation for their entry into Gaza Saturday night. *[Isranet photo]*

"I just heard on the news that Gavriel's base has been shelled," my wife, Sarah, said to me Dec. 30, referring to our 19-year-old son, a member of an Israeli army tank unit waiting on the Gaza border for the order to enter. And, she added in a deliberately calm tone, "A soldier was killed." We texted Gavriel, and within five minutes he called, safe. How, Sarah asked, did families survive war before cellphones?

For days we waited for a cabinet decision: will there be a land invasion or a new ceasefire? The politicians began to bicker while our soldiers waited on the border, in the rain and the mud. Anything but this, I said to Sarah. Not another Lebanon War, which, like Gaza, began with an impressive show of Israeli air power but ended with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah predicting the imminent end of "the Zionist entity." If we don't win this time – deliver an unambiguous blow if not topple Hamas entirely – our deterrence will further erode, inviting more rocket attacks and encouraging the jihadist momentum throughout the Middle East.

And then I caught myself: how can I be hoping for an outcome that will send my son into battle? This is my first experience as the father of a soldier, and now, after 26 years of living in Israel, I finally understand the terrible responsibility of being an Israeli. I had assumed that I'd become initiated into Israeliness when I myself was drafted into the army as a 34-year-old immigrant in 1989. But perhaps only now have I become fully Israeli. Zionism promised to empower the Jews by making them responsible for their fate. The price for that achievement is to be prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for one's commitments.

I know Gaza from a previous conflict. During the first intifadah of the late 1980s, when Palestinians revolted against the occupation, I was part of a reservist unit that patrolled Gaza's refugee camps. There I learned that there is no such thing as a benign occupation, as Israelis had once deceived themselves into believing. Our unit not only arrested terrorist suspects, but also dragged people out of their beds in the middle of the night to paint over anti-Israel graffiti and rounded up innocents after a grenade attack just to "make a presence," in army terminology. At night, in our tent, we argued about the wisdom of turning soldiers into policemen of a hostile civilian population that didn't want us there and that we didn't want as part of our society.

A majority of Israelis emerged from the first intifadah convinced that we need to do everything possible to end the occupation and ensure that our children don't serve as enforcers of Gaza's despair. That was why I initially supported the 1993 Oslo peace process that took a terrible gamble on PLO chairman Yasser Arafat's supposed transformation from terrorist to peacemaker. And even after it became clear that Arafat and other Palestinian leaders never intended to accept Israel's legitimacy, I supported the unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, simply to extricate us from that region, knowing that we would not receive peace in return.

And now my son is fighting in Gaza. The conflict he and his friends confront is far worse than my generation's experience in Gaza. In our time, we were confronted with mere rocks and Molotov cocktails. My son faces Iranian-supplied anti-tank weapons – one more price we will pay, along with the missile attacks on our towns, for the Gaza withdrawal, just as the Israeli right had warned.

Still, I don't regret that withdrawal. If Israelis are united today about our right to defend ourselves against Gaza's genocidally minded regime, it is at least partly because we are fighting from our international border. My son and his friends have one crucial advantage over my generation's experience in Gaza: they know, as we did not, that Israel was ready to make the ultimate sacrifice for peace, uprooting thousands of its citizens from their homes and endorsing a Palestinian state. My son confronts Gaza knowing that its misery is now imposed by its leaders. He knows that his country was even prepared to share its most cherished national asset, Jerusalem, with its worst enemy, Arafat, for the sake of preventing this war. That empowers him with the moral self-confidence he will need to get through the coming days. The face of my Gaza enemy was a teenager throwing rocks; the face of Gavriel's Gaza enemy is a suicide bomber.

But we are hardly free of moral anxiety. Even as I pray for Gavriel's physical safety, I pray too for his spiritual well-being: that his tank doesn't accidentally shell civilians, that he isn't caught in some terrible mistake, which can so easily happen in a war zone where terrorists hide behind innocent people.

For the past eight years, Israel has fought a single war with shifting fronts, moving from suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv to Katyusha attacks on Israeli towns near the Lebanon border to Qassam missiles on Israeli towns near the Gaza border. That war has targeted civilians, turning the home front into the actual front. And it has transformed the nature of the conflict from a nationalist struggle over Palestinian statehood to a holy war against Jewish statehood. Except for a left-wing fringe, most Israelis recognize the conflict in Gaza as part of a larger war that has been declared against our being and that we must fight.

But how? Even some right-wingers are saying that we should have declared a unilateral ceasefire after the initial air strike and then dared Hamas to continue shelling our towns, rather than risk another quagmire. And even some left-wingers are saying that we should now destroy the Hamas regime and then offer to turn Gaza over to international control or, if possible, an inter-Arab force led by Egypt. Every option is potentially disastrous. Most Israelis agree on two points: that we cannot live with a jihadist statelet on our border, and that we cannot become occupiers of Gaza again.

The despair of Gaza is contagious. One friend, a Likud supporter, said to me, "I don't know what to hope for anymore."

Meanwhile, I try to reassure myself about Gavriel's safety. Growing up in Jerusalem during the suicide bombings in the early 2000s, he has already known danger, intimacy with death. A 13-year-old acquaintance was stoned to death and was so mutilated that he could be identified only by his DNA. A friend lost the use of an eye in a bus bombing on his way to school. At least now, Gavriel and his friends can defend themselves. Perhaps one reason most of them volunteered for combat units was because now the generation of the suicide bombings can finally fight back.

Just before the conflict in Gaza began, I happened to visit Gavriel at his base. His unit's barracks had been turned into what young Israelis call a *zula* – a hangout. There were muddy couches, chairs without backs, a darbuka drum, a TV (Jay Leno was on). It could have been a teenage scene anywhere in the West, except that hanging on the walls were Hamas banners captured by the unit's veteran members in a previous round of fighting in Gaza. In a corner of the room hung a photograph of a fallen soldier. Across the bottom someone had written, "What was the rush, Shachar? Why did you have to leave us so soon?"

Even now, perhaps especially now, I feel that our family is privileged to belong to the Israeli story. Gavriel, grandson of a Holocaust survivor, is part of an army defending the Jewish people in its land. This is one of those moments when our old ideals are tested anew and found to be still vital. That provides some comfort as Sarah and I wait for the next text message.

Yossi Klein Halevi is a senior fellow at the Adelson Institute for Strategic Studies of the Shalem Center in Jerusalem and the author of At the Entrance to the Garden of Eden: A Jew's Search for God with Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land.

Opinions

A play in the Warsaw Ghetto

A play set to music, called Imagine This, was planned for the Broadway stage in 2005, but the project had to be shelved because of insufficient financing.

Faring somewhat better in London's West End recently by at least making it to the stage, the show, unfortunately, lasted for just a few weeks. It closed on Dec. 20, purportedly a victim of both the economic downturn and less than flattering reviews. Even in its natural niche audience, the Jewish community, it has had a decidedly mixed reception – and with valid reason.

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

Creating a musical within the broader theme of the Holocaust is understandably troubling. Regardless of the care taken to avoid offence, such productions are bound to be viewed as morally dubious. And though accusations of disrespect, or at least distaste, have not for the most part been publicly levelled at this particular play, its flop at the box office likely reflects some of the ambivalence with which it's been regarded.

But get beyond such misgivings, and what Imagine This provides is a passionate and powerful depiction of Jewish courage and defiance in the face of horrendous oppression. With the Warsaw Ghetto as its setting, the musical focuses on a troupe of Jewish actors who, while living in the ghetto and performing to survive, enact the story of Masada. The defining anthem that seals the juxtaposition between the Warsaw Ghetto and the Masada experiences is perhaps contained in the poignant rendering of one of the songs, which goes: "The past lives on in tales like these, how we chose, standing upright, to remain standing upright, not to live life on our knees… imagine this."

* * *

Aside from her unseemly personalized comments, Rebecca Woods Baum's bizarre interpretation of my position on campus advocacy ("Response to Hart [1]," CJN, Nov. 27, 2008) reflects precisely the sort of defensiveness, rigidity and intolerance that causes such divisiveness among various of our student groups.

But amid her many revelations, the most profoundly disturbing is her assertion that there is a separation between campus anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. Such a declaration not only flies in the face of what is widely accepted as modern anti-Semitism, but also sanitizes and substantively weakens the case that we should be making to protect the rights and dignity of our Jewish campus communities.

Also, to infer that I am "creating a scapegoat [of Hillel]" is preposterous. Given the mainstream recognition that Hillel enjoys on campus, not to mention the generous funding it receives, surely it is reasonable to hold it accountable not only when it is successful, but also when it appears to fall short of expectation. Without doubt, a revamp of its Israel advocacy activities is drastically needed, and the sooner the better.

Israeli election system needs an overhaul

Politicians in Israel are unpopular. They're perceived as self-serving and often just plain corrupt. Police investigations and court proceedings against prime ministers, presidents, ministers and members of Knesset are weekly occurrences. With them as role models, little new blood is infused into the political system, as talented young people look to other avenues to realize their genius, wary of the quagmire.

The public's disdain is also expressed in a continued decline in voter turnout for Knesset elections. While this does not necessarily reflect apathy in a society where everyone has an opinion about everything, it does echo Israeli voter fatigue due to frequent general elections and people's repugnance of anything political.

Yuri Lansberg in Jerusalem

Under Israel's proportional representation system, the Knesset's 120 seats are divided proportionally among parties according to their electoral success. A party receiving 25 per cent of the vote gets 30 seats, and so on. There are no local constituencies and MKs are not directly accountable to voters. A party need only get two per cent of the vote to be represented in Parliament. This gives rise to an abundance of parties. Thirty-one ran in 2003. Twelve got enough votes to get into the Knesset.

Supporters assert this scheme results in the Knesset democratically mirroring the diversity of political views existing within society and that this is what true democracy is all about.

Critics claim an abundance of parties creates governmental havoc, particularly in Israel, where no party has ever gained a majority. After elections, the largest party's leader is tasked with forming a coalition government. Given the number of parties, putting that puzzle together requires backroom peddling and promise making, with each faction extorting benefits not always for the general good. When this task is finally completed, the government formed is forever susceptible to demands of parties holding the balance of power. The outcome is stalemates and stagnation. Effective decision-making is often frustrated and governments fall far too often.

This is dangerous in a country whose leaders are ceaselessly charged with making complex decisions regarding war and peace, not to mention Israel's economic challenges during the current global meltdown.

There are other reasons for the distaste many Israelis feel for politics and politicians. Before elections, each party announces its list of candidates and their rank within these lists. These lists are formed using various methods. Some parties have central committees or advisory boards who decide who'll be on their list and in which order. Others have the rabbis decide.

The latest trend is primaries. Several of the larger parties have recently held such votes in preparation for the Feb. 10 elections, hoping large party electorates will produce lists not corrupted by inner party power struggles. However, as recent events have shown, these hopes have not materialized, as vote contractors, deal-making and suspected fraud have infested the primaries, producing candidate lists that are much the same as those of the outgoing Knesset, if not worse. Worthy legislators (there are a few) with no broad political base, have been relegated to unrealistic positions on their party lists, often replaced by party apparatchiks.

A major overhaul of our election system is necessary. We must look to greener pastures for examples suitable for Israel, where mixtures of both proportional representation and British-style parliamentarianism act together.

Such is the case in Germany, where half the legislature is elected proportionally and the other in ridings and constituencies throughout the country. Each citizen gets two votes, one for a national list and the other for a candidate in his riding.

An even more interesting version of this method exists in New Zealand where its legislature, like Israel's, has only 120 seats.

Moreover, in both these countries, parties must obtain at least five per cent of the popular vote to gain entry into Parliament.

This model ensures at least half of MPs are directly elected on their merits, providing their constituents a personal representative to whom they can address worries and grievances. It makes for more responsible politicians.

At the same time, parties elected proportionally ensure Parliament will continue to represent the diverse views existing within society, while the five per cent threshold effectively narrows the number of parties, discouraging smaller ones from running at all.

This combined model of elections might serve Israel well. It would not do away with all the darker sides of party politicking, and that's precisely why its implementation could just about succeed. Conversely, adding an element of political accountability might help re-engage a cynical, disappointed and disgruntled public and renew its faith in the politicians who govern us.

Israeli fringe groups set the agenda

Israel is facing a number of major challenges from the outside – Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Al Qaida, to name a few – and crisis from within, including leadership, education, the unresolved religious/secular dispute, and more. But instead of focusing on these basic problems, some Israelis are wasting resources obsessing over fringe causes and fighting minor battles with each other.

This problem applies equally to the right and left of the Israeli political spectrum, and the ardent supporters of both camps in the Diaspora. On the right, the desperate attempt to establish and hold on to one more outpost and caravan in the Judea and Samaria regions of the West Bank has become an end in itself, totally out of proportion to the wider picture. In Hebron, the attempt to use force to occupy a building which may or may not have been purchased legally, has mobilized hundreds of dedicated young Israelis into a misguided frenzy.

Gerald Steinberg in Jerusalem

Instead of using their intelligence and energies on the wider threats to the Israeli and the Jewish people in these difficult times, they are battling the police, the army and the courts for a few hundred meters of property. Hebron is important in Jewish history, but it is not more important than the survival of the State of Israel, and the efforts put into this battle are entirely disproportionate.

Similarly, more than three years after the unilateral withdrawal of the Jewish settlements from Gaza, the activists and former residents are still fighting battles against this decision. In retrospect, the decision to evacuate the military bases was a mistake, as was the failure to respond forcefully when the first rockets were fired, and later when Hamas took control. But at this stage, it is useless to demand a reversal in history, and expect that these communities will be re-established under Israeli control in Gaza. The energies wasted to artificially maintain the fiction of a return to Gaza scenario are wasted.

On the left, leaders of self-selected groups like B'tselem, Machsom Watch and dozens of others are seeking to impose their personal views of a messianic peace by exploiting human rights claims. In this secular religion, the main goal is to force Israel to return to the 1949 armistice line (the so-called pre-1967 Green Line) and establish a Palestinian state in this territory. But peace with Palestinians engaged in their own civil war, while continuing to reject the legitimacy of a Jewish state regardless of borders, is far more complex than "ending the occupation."

Having failed to sell this idealized vision in the Israeli democratic process, these organizations are now turning to lobbying against Israel from the outside. B'tselem has opened an office in Washington, in the effort to lobby Congress – one of the most important bastions of support for Israel in the important battles – to join the chorus of attackers.

The money for much of this destructive activity, which greatly amplifies the impact of a small number of individuals, comes in large part from Diaspora Jews who have bought into or, in some cases, are among the leaders of these diversionary causes. Wealthy individuals and foundations pay for many of the advertising campaigns and other activities for both left and right. Donors to the New Israel Fund give millions of dollars to promote groups like B'tselem, Adalah, Mossawa, New Profile (a member of the Coalition of Women for Peace, and are under investigation by the Israeli attorney general for encouraging refusal of military service). With this legitimization, outsiders with their own agendas, including the Ford Foundation, the European Union and anti-Israel church groups, provide additional funds for fringe groups.

As is often the case, the two ends of the political spectrum often meet at the extremes. In this case, both the left and right fringes are attacking and undermining the IDF – the main framework that insures Israeli survival. And they are spinning Israel into an increasingly dangerous orbit.

The Kirshner File

MFO contributes to peace in the Middle East

For almost three decades, the Multinational Force and Observers has played an integral role in stabilizing Israel's historic peace treaty with Egypt. "We're a confidence builder," said Michael Sternberg, a senior MFO official in Tel Aviv. "A model peacekeeping force."

Sheldon Kirshner in Tel Aviv

Consisting of 1,700 soldiers, sailors, aviators, technicians and engineers from 11 countries, including Canada, the MFO supervises the security provisions of the treaty to ensure that military violations do not occur. Serving at the pleasure of Israel and Egypt, the force was formed in the wake of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, when the two main combatants, Israel and Egypt, turned to the United Nations and the United States to bring about a ceasefire.

As a result, the UN dispatched peacekeepers to the Sinai Peninsula to physically separate the Israeli and Egyptian armies and monitor Israel's first disengagement agreement with Egypt. That accord, hammered out by the then U.S. secretary of state, Henry Kissinger and known as Sinai I, was signed in January 1974. In September 1975, with the signing of Sinai II, the United States agreed to establish the Sinai Field Mission, the forerunner of the MFO, which began its mission in February 1976.

More than a year later, the then president of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, visited Jerusalem in a spectacular gesture, setting into motion a series of talks that culminated with the 1978 Camp David Accords, which created a framework for peace between Israel and Egypt. On March 26, 1979, Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty formally ending their 31-year-old state of war and paving the way for Israel's phased withdrawal from Sinai, captured by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War.

Michael Sternberg
(Sheldon Kirshner photo)

In the meantime, efforts were made to form a permanent UN peacekeeping force in the Sinai. Due to objections by the Soviet Union, which was at odds with the United States over a number of global issues, such a force did not materialize. With the UN out of the picture, Israel, Egypt and the United States launched negotiations to set up an alternative peacekeeping force.

On Aug. 3, 1981, the MFO came into being. The MFO – which is funded in equal parts by Israel, Egypt and the United States – verifies compliance with the peace treaty by ensuring that neither side violates limitations on military forces and equipment in three security zones in the Sinai – A, B and C – and in one security enclave in Israel, known as Zone D.

In Zone A, closest to the Egyptian mainland, Egypt is permitted to station a mechanized infantry division of up to 22,000 troops and early warning systems. Egypt is also allowed to maintain up to 4,000 soldiers in Zone B. The MFO is based in Zone C, but Egypt is permitted to position lightly armed police there as well.

In Zone D, which falls within sovereign Israeli territory, Israel may deploy four infantry battalions comprising no more than 4,000 troops and early warning systems.

The MFO operates checkpoints and observation posts and carries out reconnaissance patrols in Zone C and along the adjacent international boundary. It also guarantees freedom of international marine navigation in the Strait of Tiran and access to the Gulf of Aqaba.

The MFO is composed of personnel from the United States, Canada, France, Italy, Hungary, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, Uruguay, Colombia and Fiji.

The United States contributes the biggest contingent, 685 troops. Canada's contribution consists of 28 soldiers, representing all three branches of the armed forces and ranging in rank from corporal to colonel.

Commanded by a major-general from Norway, the force is locally headquartered at North Camp in El Gorah, 37 kilometres southeast of the town of El Arish. All the Canadian peacekeepers are based there. The smaller South Camp, located near Sharm el Sheikh, is on the southeast tip of the Sinai peninsula on a bluff overlooking the Red Sea.

In addition, the MFO maintains 30 smaller observatory sites within Zone C. One of them, on Tiran Island, off Sharm El Sheikh, technically lies in Saudi Arabian territory.

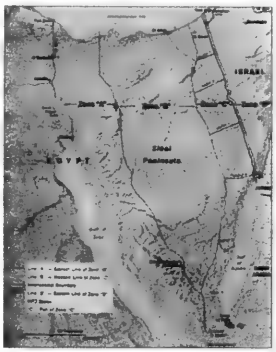
The MFO has at its disposal three infantry battalions, a support battalion, a coastal patrol unit, rotary wing and fixed aviation elements, a transport and engineering unit, an air traffic control unit and military police.

The force is headed by a director-general based in Rome. The current office holder, James LaRocco, is a retired American diplomat. He and his staff audit operations and are in charge of management, recruitment and procurement.

The MFO has regional offices in Tel Aviv and Cairo. Sternberg, a 71-year-old former U.S. State Department employee, has been the director-general's representative in Israel for the past 17 years.

"Representatives must be American citizens and have diplomatic and military backgrounds," Sternberg explained in a recent interview in his spacious office, which offers a panoramic view of Hayarkon Park.

Sternberg and his colleague in Cairo see to it that the MFO is always well supplied. As he put it, "The Sinai is an inhospitable desert, and the MFO requires a lot of logistical support, from food and water to medical and technical equipment."



International peacekeepers patrol the Sinai Peninsula

Born in New York City, Sternberg served in the U.S. Navy for nine years before joining the American foreign service. From 1973 to 1979, he was deputy director of Israeli and Palestinian affairs in the State Department, working with the then secretary of state, Henry Kissinger. From 1975 until 1981, he was chief of staff of the Camp David autonomy talks, which fizzled out. As well, Sternberg was consul general in Thessaloniki, Greece.

The MFO performs its duties quietly, he said. "We keep a low profile. Our job is to serve the parties through our discretion. We don't seek out publicity."

Everyone agrees that the MFO has been remarkably successful in carrying out its mandate, ostensibly because Israel and Egypt fully support its deployment. "There is almost universal backing for the MFO in both countries," he noted. "As long as the parties feel we add value and stability to their respective security, the MFO will continue to function."

Sternberg, however, would not be drawn into a discussion as to whether Israel or Egypt have ever violated military clauses of the peace treaty.

Four nations – Israel, Egypt, the United States and Germany – provide the majority of the funds for its $65 million (US) annual budget. An additional four countries – Switzerland, Japan, Holland and Norway – are also funders. "We're a cost effective organization," said Sternberg. "Our budget is equivalent to the cost of two aircraft."

Describing the MFO as one of the most efficient peacekeeping forces in the world, he observed, "We're a model for peacekeeping operations. We're an important institution for preserving peace in this area."

Nonetheless, the MFO has been targeted by Arab terrorists. In 1984, the director-general, Leamon Hunt, was assassinated outside his private residence in Rome. And in 2005 and 2006, MFO armored vehicles were ambushed.

Accidents have also plagued the MFO. In 1985, a chartered airplane carrying 248 peacekeepers from the United States crashed in Gander, Nfld., killing all aboard. Almost two years ago, an MFO aircraft went down in the Sinai, causing the deaths of nine French and Canadian passengers.

Despite these tragedies, the MFO – perhaps the harbinger of an international peacekeeping force to patrol the Gaza Strip after the current fighting between Israel and Hamas dies down – is still going strong and contributing to peace in at least one strategic corner of the Middle East.

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Mental illness called a 'well-hidden' problem

Continued from page 3

"We have such a vibrant Jewish community. We have 200,000 Jews in the community who support wonderful things like Baycrest and Reena and Zareinu, and I don't want to take away from them, but this is where we would like to be. There is such a need for assistance and housing in a Jewish environment, in a Jewish setting for young adults," Rachel said.

"We do need to do some serious fundraising. The money is out there. We have one of the most affluent Jewish communities in the world."

Richard Cummings

She added that it is important to get through to UJA Federation of Greater Toronto to get more funding.

"I understand Israel is very important, and I don't want to take away from Israel. Jewish education is very important. If you're not going to educate young Jewish people, you might as well close the synagogue doors, but this issue also needs the support of the Jewish community."

Jewish Family and Child (JF&C) executive director Richard Cummings and JF&C supervisor and social worker Fay Geitzhals agree that appealing to the compassion and judgment of the community is the key to improving the situation.

'This issue needs the support of the Jewish community'

"People are learning. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the Globe and Mail… have done a great deal to bring the story to the surface, and I think people are much more understanding and compassionate," Cummings said.

"I think we are ready as a community to evolve into being more supportive. The de-institutionalization that took place decades ago has left a significant cohort of individuals with mental illness just wandering through the community. We shouldn't assume that the community won't step up. Maybe we can look more optimistically and hopefully at our raising consciousness and sensitization and consider that the community is ready to step up to the plate."

Geitzhals, who thinks that mental illness in the Jewish community is a well-hidden problem, said that "it's similar to any of the other issues that we've raised in the Jewish community like woman abuse or addiction, in that once we raise awareness and put it out there, the community is ready to take a look at it and to acknowledge that it exists and create a system for it."

She suggested that one of the services needed to properly care for the mentally ill is a good trusteeship program.

If an elderly couple is concerned about an adult child who is living with them and they don't know how to care for their child once their own health begins to deteriorate, she could help the parents and the child become more independent, Geitzhals said.

In her capacity at JF&C, she would take over trusteeship or help them get a trustee, perhaps a sibling, and then investigate what resources might be available for the child to remain in the home or move to a different setting such as a group home.

"Rather than saying you've done wrong, I think together we can envision a way of doing right. There is a different nuance there. It doesn't have to be a battle," she said.

"We as an agency are doing our utmost, but more help is needed and more resources are needed," Cummings said.

For information, call JF&C at 416-638-7800 or contact Goldman-Brown at rochelle@chaitikvah.org or 905-886-6520.

CIVIC HERO: Vaughan resident Ellise Gasner was recently presented with the city's Civic Hero Award in council chambers. Gasner was recognized for her commitment to the environment and her involvement in the large household recycling program, a one-year pilot project that addresses the needs of large households in the City of Vaughan. Households consisting of seven or more people have the opportunity to apply for an exemption to the Greening Vaughan standard program relating to waste and recycling. Upon approval of the exemption, the household receives, free of charge, one additional blue box and green bin and 25 garbage tags. The civic hero award is designed to recognize the residents whose deeds, in the opinion of council, demonstrate examples of civic responsibility. Here Vaughan city council members and the Gasner family – Ellise Gasner in the centre holding the award is flanked by Mayor Linda Jackson and Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman, who nominated her.

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In cjnews.com this week

Olympic gold medallist swimmer Jason Lezak might look like a Greek god – he's 6 feet 4 inches tall, all muscle, and has an aura of goodness that seems to touch all those around him – however, one thing makes him even better – he's Jewish!

Chabad Richmond Hill opens new building

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

After 11 years in temporary quarters, Chabad Lubavitch of Richmond Hill is gearing up for an inaugural banquet Jan. 15 and an open house three days later, featuring food, crafts, music and dancing at its new 10,000-square-foot building.

The open house will run from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 18.

The Chabad Romano Centre is located at 10,500 Bathurst St.on a 2.5-acre tract of land south of Teston Road.

Land developer Mario Romano, who is also contributing to the cost of the synagogue, donated the land to Chabad. In a 2006 article, Romano told The CJN that when he was growing up in Buenos Aires, most of his neighbourhood friends were Jewish, and that he wanted to "have respect for" the Jewish community in the area of the new centre.

The building's sanctuary, featuring a dark-stained ark and windows forming the shape of a menorah, can seat "300 comfortably," according to Rabbi Mendel Bernstein, spiritual leader of the congregation.

At 10,000 square feet, the $3 million building is more than triple the size of the 3,000-square-foot space Chabad occupied in rented premises diagonally across the road, at the northeast corner of Bathurst Street and Elgin Mills Road, for the past half-dozen years.

Rabbi Bernstein said that there is enough land to more than double the current size of the new synagogue, but that finances did not permit a larger building right now. "This is phase one," he said.

"It's absolutely a dream come true. A real shul is something we've looked forward to from the day we moved here," said Rabbi Bernstein in an interview in a basement classroom of the the new centre Dec. 22, as construction continued upstairs.

Sitting in the as yet unfurnished classroom, its floor covered with fine dust from the ongoing work, the rabbi recalled that after he and his wife Toby first moved to Richmond Hill in 1997, their basement served as the synagogue for almost five years.

The congregation's growth is also reflected by the hiring two years ago of Rabbi Shlomo Vorovitch as program and youth director.

Rabbi Bernstein said the new shul's four classrooms would serve Chabad's preschool students and "hopefully also [part of] the Hebrew school."

Almost 250 children from senior kindergarten through Grade 7 attend Chabad's Hebrew school in Richmond Hill. Classes are currently held in rented public school premises.

The new building had its ground-breaking on June 15. Its lease expired at the end of December.

In the rented premises, a large preschool classroom doubled as the sanctuary, which served about 100 worshippers on an average Shabbat morning.

"We had to fold away our small shul after every Shabbos," said the rabbi. "Everything had to be on wheels."

Chabad Richmond Hill also holds twice-daily services, mornings and evenings.

For further information about the synagogue or its opening events, go to www.chabadrc.org., or call 905-770-7700. Tickets for the banquet cost $150 per person; the daytime event is free.

Chabad Lubavitch of Richmond Hill's new building, the Chabad Romano Centre, features windows in the shape of a menorah. [*Frances Kraft photo*]

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Join us as we commemorate
Raoul Wallenberg Day*
Special screening of "BLESSED IS THE MATCH". This new documentary about Hannah Szenes illustrates the life and death of the Jewish Hungarian WWII resistance fighter and poet.
Monday, January 19, 2009
7 pm
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BLESSED IS THE MATCH
*Designated by the Government of Canada in 2001
UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO

Bucharest Kristallnacht: Yizkor

Guest Voice

"Probably no country has had a darker record in the treatment of its Jews than Romania. It was the most virulently anti-Semitic country in prewar Europe."
–Nora Levin, The Holocaust

By BARUCH COHEN
In loving memory of Malca z"l

The painful events of Jan. 21 to 23, 1941, perpetrated by the Romanian Nazi regime, the "Legionaries," signalled the beginning of the Romanian Jewish Holocaust. I was 21 years old. I was there. I am a witness to the Bucharest Kristallnacht.

Five historians have described those infamous days this way:

Nora Levin: "The violence has been described by eyewitnesses as an unspeakable butchery. Iron Guardists stormed into the Jewish quarter in Bucharest, burning synagogues and demolishing homes and stores. For miles around the city, bodies were found without clothes and without teeth. In the morgue, bodies were so cut up they were no longer recognizable as human. In the municipal slaughterhouse [where, on Jan. 25, I went to search for my missing father –BC], bodies were observed hanging like carcasses of cattle." –The Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry 1933-1945, Thomas Y. Crowell Company N.Y. 1968.

Matatias Carp: "The fascist terror and persecution exerted on the Jewish communities within the bounds of Romania were as violent and destructive as they were in other countries of Nazi domination and influence. Romanian fascism had its own 'original' methods in order to exterminate 'their' Jews. In three days – Jan. 21-23, 1941, 130 Jews were brutally killed." –The Black Book: Cartea Neagra, Diogene Publishing, Bucharest, 1946, reprinted 1996.

Lucy S. Dawidowicz: "In January 1941, a massacre took place in Bucharest, in which about 170 Jews were murdered in an especially abhorrent manner." –The War Against the Jews: 1933-1945, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, N.Y,. 1975.

I.C. Butnaru: "For a period of more than 72 hours, the Jewish districts were at the mercy of the masses. During this interval, several thousand Jews were hauled out of their houses, arrested in the streets, houses of prayer, stores, places of work; and transferred to legionary headquarters, police precinct houses, or even to some synagogues, for example the Malbim Synagogue, which had been occupied and converted into a torture centre… The Jewish districts in Bucharest were left for a period of three days and three nights at the mercy of the vilest and most barbarian fascist elements, which had been educated, incited and trained for years for that 'great' hour!" –The Silent Holocaust: Romania and its Jews, Greenwood Press, New York, 1992.

Radu Ioanid: "Most of the murders during the three days took place in Jilava Forest, the rest at the slaughterhouse at the intersection of the roads of Fundeni and Pantelimon, in Bucharest's Noi district. On Jan. 21, the 'Legionaries' gathered about 200 Jews into the basement of their headquarters. The fascists did not forget to take all of the victims' valuables before they set upon the Jews. They drove the Jews in the basement up to the attic under the rain of blows. Prisoners were finally made to drink from their basin in which Rabbi Gutman had been permitted to wash the blood from his head.

"Other Legionaries trucked the second group of more than 90 Jews via Gurgin Road to Jilava Forest, where they shot most of them, after which the murderers stole the gold teeth, clothes and shoes from the corpses that they left under the trees." –The Holocaust in Romania: The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies Under the Antonescu Regime, 1940-1944, Ivan R. Dee and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Chicago 2000.

* * *

On Oct. 22-23, 2008, at the Giurgiului Bucharest Jewish Cemetery, a symbolic pogrom took place, indicating that in today's Romania, anti-Semitism, hooliganism and fascism are as present as they always have been: 133 graves were destroyed. The Romanian authorities discovered the perpetrators of this crime: children age 12 and 13. Since no disciplinary measures could supposedly be taken against children, the case was closed. This is today's Romania, whose Jewish population numbers some 6,000 elderly people, out of a former Jewish population of 900,000 prior to World War II.

Don't judge a book by its cover

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

JEWISH EDUCATION
The Next Generation

Allowing children to think and develop autonomously vis a vis monitoring their exposure to outside culture is always a delicate balance for parents, and never more so when it comes to nurturing their perspectives Jewishly. Both professionally and personally, I am interested in the books that children read about Judaism and Israel, and religion in general. To that end, a cautionary tale.

Recently, while scanning the children's section of my local public library, I ran across a book with the title What Muslims Think and How they Live, by Rick Hodges. I signed out the book and eventually came to the sixth chapter. It is titled "Views on the Issue of Palestine," which in and of itself, gave me a sense of the direction the writing might be headed in, and I was not misled. One of the opening sentences of the chapter delivers the message loud and clear: "The Israeli-Palestinian issue is only one of many instances where U.S. foreign policy involvement in the Islamic world has angered and offended Muslims."

Moving sideways from that pronouncement, Hodges briefly summarizes Judaism as the oldest monotheistic faith and recounts the Jews' settlement in Canaan and the subsequent conquests of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persian, Greeks and Romans. As we move to the modern period and the first stirrings of the Zionist movement, the book's take on history begins to reveal itself once again: "Initially, Palestinian Arabs welcomed the new settlers, but as the Jews took over more land, the Muslim Arabs began to resist." Is this muted code for the 1929 Hebron massacre and other incidents of destruction? A child might never know.

The rest of the book's narrative is inevitable. Palestinian Arabs flee their homes, "hoping to avoid violence, terrorism and war," and after June 1967, there is an "Israeli occupation" and Palestinians are "permitted few rights in Israeli society." This lack of rights leads to understandable Palestinian "anger at the lack of progress and at their oppressive living conditions." Somewhat quickly and blithely, the book sweeps through Oslo and its aftermath with the following conclusion: "In the end, [Yasser] Arafat and the Palestinians felt they had been betrayed both by Israel, which had not lived up to its Oslo promises, and by the United States, which had not made Israel meet its commitments."

The book is packaged in a quasi-scholarly way, as part of a larger book series called "Introducing Islam," under the general editorship of Dr. Khaleed Abou El-Fadl, a well-known academic at the UCLA school of law. A child encountering all of this could not be faulted for absorbing the information as beyond reproach.

Readers, depending on their political inclinations, may see the work as distortion/outright fabrication, or as a correct attempt to portray the Arab perspective towards western imperialism (the United States predictably is scolded over and over again as provoking Arab resentment). My interest here is to both reflect on what it is the ordinary Canadian child runs across in the library, and to remind parents of the obvious – that libraries carry books of varying orientations, some of which may not be amenable in any way to your particular family's point of view.

ש'שאר י'נינו

גידי קורן וחברים

סה יהיה

אני לא מקנא במי שיהיה ראש הממשלה הבא של ישראל. בין אם לבני או בין אם נתניהו- הוא-היא יצטרכו להתעסק עם המשך הטרור של החמאס, עם קאליציה שבה אין לאף מפלגה רוב, והקטנת סותרות את הנדלות, עם משבר כלכלי עמוק. כמעט קשה להאמין שמישהו שפוי ירצה לעסוק בזה. מזה כעשר שנים-כל ראש ממשלה מכהן נחקר על כלילים, ועושה רושם שראש הממשלה הנוכחי גם יעמוד על כך לדין. או כמו במשל יותם התנ"כי- מדוע ירצה אדם הגון לעמוד בראשות ממשלה? כמובן מן ההיבט הפחות ציני- מי שיקח על עצמו את המשימה, יצטרך להיות חכם ופיקח ובעל זמניות, כדי לא להישחק באתגרים האלה. אבל שישאר ביניינו.

אחריות

פעמים כל כך רבות לא מסכימים אנשים לקחת אחריות על מעשיהם, ותחפשים את השיך גימל להטיל עליו את האשמה. רותי יזמר שלחה לי את הקטע החכם הבא על אחריות:

"המילה אחריות היא המילה המדהימה ביותר בשפה העברית: ראשית היא מתחילה ב-א ומסתיימת ב-ת, והכוונה היא כשכשמישהו לוקח אחריות, היא צריכה להיות כוללת מהתחלה עד הסוף.

שנית, המילה אחריות היא מילה עם משמעות מצטברת, כלומר: א-הכוונה היא לאני, קודם כל אני צריך לקחת אחריות על עצמי. אח-אחרי שלקחתי אחריות על עצמי אני יכול לקחת אחריות על אחי, הכוונה למעגל שקרוב אלי.

אחר-השלב הבא הוא לקחת אחריות על האחֵר-והכוונה היא על כל אדם.

אחֵרי-ברגע שלקחתי אחריות על שלושת המעגלים הראשונים אני יכול להוביל אחֵרי.

אחרי-אמונה. יש שיגידו אלוהים, יש אלה שיגידו הבריאה, או ארגיה קוסמית.

ולבסוף-אחריות.

מה שעוד לומדים מהמילה המדהימה הזו הוא שיש חשיבות לסדר: אדם אינו יכול להיות אחראי על אחרים לפני שהוא אחראי על עצמו.

Slumdog Millionair

סרט הודי-בוליבודי מרתק ונוגע ללב על נער אשפתות הודי שזוכה בפרס מליון הדולאר בגירסה ההודית של תכנית הטלביזיה "מי רוצה להיות מליונר". המשטרה המקומית חושדת בו שזכה בתואר במרמה, והוא מספר לחוקר המשטרתי את סיפור חייו המרגש והמרתק, ודרכו מסביר איך נסיון חייו הביא אותו לדעת את התשובות לשאלות הטריוויה הקשות שנשאל.

זהו סרט מפתיע שזכה לביקורות נלהבות של הקשוחים במבקרים בזכות העלילה המרתקת שלו, כמו גם בזכות משחק מעולה וקצב שמשאיר אותך יושב על קצה הכיסא.

תשע בסולם קורן.

Jewish Life

Shalev novel includes lessons about pigeons

A Pigeon and a Boy by Meir Shalev, Random House.

Books
Bernard Baskin

Yair Mendelsohn is an Israeli tour guide, unhappy in his thankless job and saddened by his enervating marriage. His mother advises him to seek two things he truly needs – a stirring story and a home that he can call his own.

In time, he reports to his mother with a compelling story about a teenage boy who becomes a homing pigeon handler with the fledgling Jewish army, both before and during the War of Independence.

He was called the Baby because he was short and chubby, and always busy with his birds, and he never let anyone get near the loft because he didn't want to frighten them.

Pigeons are a recurring motif in the lives of Baby and the young woman he loves. The reader learns a good deal about pigeons. For example, with a regular pigeon, the beak protrudes from the head like the handle on a skillet, but the homing pigeon's beak runs straight from the line of the forehead and she has a light-colored swelling. In addition, her build is stronger, her shoulders broader, and inside she has the lungs and heart of an athlete. And if you see her fly, she flies alone, in a straight line, higher than regular pigeons.

Baby is killed in battle, but not before he performs a hardly believable act and dispatches a message to his beloved that only she can understand. "The pigeon ascended rapidly. Above the flames, above the smoke, above the gunshots, above the shouts, to the sky blue, the silence Homeward. To her. Cross the great sea of air that has no borders or sounds but for the whistling of the wind in your feathers and the pulsing of your blood and the shouting of my words on your leg."

Her response is quick and likewise hardly credible. I leave it to readers to discover her reaction for themselves.

In the second portion of the novel, Yair's mother tells her son that he must always personally greet his house on his return. "Say hello to the house, she instructs him and listen closely because it will always answer back."

Yair eventually finds his dream home. "I came to it returning, not arriving. Hello, house, I said to it and it answered me. I built and was built, I loved and was loved, my soul grew a new skin, a roof, a floor, a wall. I have a wooden deck and an outdoor shower, and time and a story and a view and a tin to hear the rain during the approaching winter."

Shalev's novel offers an arresting portrait of Israel from pre-statehood days to the present. His poetic style and keen eye for his country's beauty enhance the reader's enjoyment. He describes his home as one that "looks out on hills upon hills, like the backs of sheep growing distant and paler and topped with small and stubborn mastic trees and slopes running yellow."

This novel which was awarded Israel's the prestigious Brenner Prize is highly recommended.

Modern Israeli money

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

They are the elite of Israeli society: presidents and prime ministers, rabbis and poets. And their portraits can be yours to hang on a wall or carry in your pocket. Israel's modern currency tells the story of the evolution of the country by depicting its heroes and its symbols, new and old. As Israel celebrates its 60th anniversary, you can follow the country's numismatic history of pounds, prutot, agarot and shkalim.

The Bank of Israel has put together an impressive site, particularly in the area devoted to Israel Notes and Coins. **[tinyurl.com/bankisr]** Along the way, there are some great anecdotes.

On the eve of the establishment of the country, banknotes could not be printed locally, since the British Mandate had not yet expired and because of the lack of local expertise. At the same time, foreign firms did not want to print money for a nonexistent state. Eventually, the American Banknote Company of New York was persuaded to help. But in order to get approval from the U.S. State Department to print foreign banknotes, it had to give no indication on the notes that they were "legal tender." That phrase had to be printed onto the bills later. **[tinyurl.com/bankisr2]**

When the notes were printed, the name of the new country hadn't yet been decided, so the phrase "Palestine Pound" was used on the notes (as it had been during the Mandate). The banknotes reached the country secretly in July 1948 and went into circulation the following month. It wasn't until the country was four years old that it had its own "Israel pounds." You can read about – and view – very early coins and banknotes of the British Mandate of Palestine at the informative page created by Howard M. Berlin. **[drberlin.com/palestine]**

Every so often, you come across a website that is not only thorough and entertaining, but clearly a labour of love. Pinchas Bar-Zeev's SHEQEL – The Online Catalog of Israel Numismatics 1927-present clearly falls into that category. It painstakingly illustrates coins dating back to the British Mandate through the current new shekel series. **[tinyurl.com/sheqel]** Future sections will focus on state medals, numismatic covers and telephone coins – *asimonim* – which veteran visitors to Israel will remember with some exasperation as tokens that had to be horded if you ever wanted a shot at using an Israeli payphone. **[tinyurl.com/asimon]**

Many coins minted in Israel are not legal tender but have been created to honour a personality or a celebrity. The Israel Government Coins & Medals Corporation has released a Book of Psalms with a Shema Yisrael medal, medallions with the likeness of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, as well as reproductions of the works of Marc Chagall and Édouard Manet. **[tinyurl.com/isragift]**

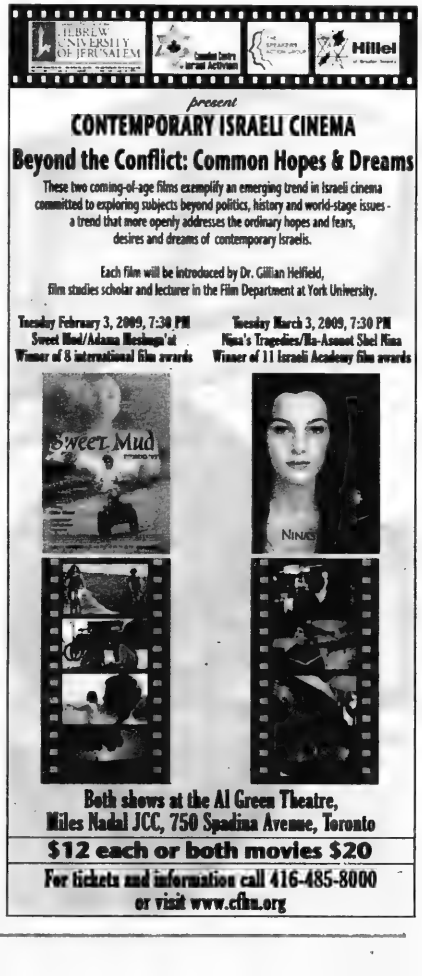
While Canadians have been embroiled in heated debates about whether to retire the penny, Israelis said goodbye to both the one- and five-agorah coins (which cost 16 agorot to mint.) **[tinyurl.com/5agorot]** On the other hand, Israel is among the first countries in the world to introduce a banknote printed on polymer. The 20-new Israel shekel note is being printed on the plastic-type material that's more durable than paper and incorporates sophisticated security features. **[tinyurl.com/polybill]**

Did you return from your last trip to Israel with local bills you didn't have time to exchange? They're *probably* OK, but you may want to read up on how to protect yourself from counterfeit Israeli bills in circulation. Look for watermarks, security threads, microtext, and my favourite: two triangles printed on both sides of the bill that when held up to a light form a perfect Magen David. **[tinyurl.com/securemoney]**

Israel's current set of banknotes has been around for 10 years and carries portraits of former prime minister Moshe Sharett and writer Shmuel Yosef Agnon, as well as former president Zalman Shazar on the highest denomination in circulation, the 200-new Israel shekel bill. A 500-new Israel shekel banknote will be added in the future. The next personality to be honoured: Yitzhak Rabin. **[tinyurl.com/bankisr3]**

And if you happen to have a drawer full of older banknotes that were withdrawn from circulation in 2000 – carrying the likenesses of Maimonides, Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir – don't worry. You can exchange them for crisp new ones at any branch of the Bank of Israel until the end of 2010. **[tinyurl.com/oldnote]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.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Guest Voice

Visit to Sderot

By MENUCHA LEVIN

Just one hour away from chilly Jerusalem there is a sunny small town surrounded by green fields, with spacious, affordable apartments, fresh air and virtually no crime. The people are friendly, with a unity rare in other Israeli communities.

It sounds like a delightful place, and in many ways it is. However, there is one catch. The name of this pretty little town is Sderot.

Although many people have not even heard of the place, those who are familiar with it know that Sderot, just over the border from Gaza, has hostile neighbours. Terrorists have besieged the town with Qassam rockets for the past eight years, killing and wounding dozens of people and terrorizing many more. Many residents have left, no longer able to bear the constant fear, the 15-second warning siren to run to a bomb shelter, their children being unable to walk safely to school or the park, and businesses closing down. The people who remain often have no choice, as they are unable to sell their homes.

Yet, some decide to stay on, despite everything. One woman, a nurse, explained that she has lived in Sderot for the past 11 years and will remain, because "there is no place like home."

Recently, via Connections Israel, an Israeli solidarity organization, a group of us visited Sderot. When we first arrived, we saw the parking lot of the police station, piled high with the ugly pieces of metal that were Qassam rockets. Then, as we walked past the fire station, the warning siren went off. We were told to crouch down on the floor for a few moments until the all-clear signal came, thus giving us a tiny hint of what daily life is like for the residents.

At the trauma centre, one of the staff explained how victims are treated.

From the backyard of the centre we viewed a strange sight – bus shelters that had been removed from all over town and left there. Unlike in other communities, the bus shelters in Sderot needed to be replaced by concrete bomb shelters.

Just as we were about to leave, another siren went off and we were quickly herded back inside the trauma centre. A teenage girl was brought in, crying and in shock. At that moment, she symbolized for us all the trauma victims of the town.

We met a man who chose to live in Sderot, part of a 150-member group called Doresh-Tov, who came to the town to show their support in the most tangible way possible.

Stepping into the backyard of his office building, we viewed the field where Qassam rockets often explode. Apartment buildings, houses and a school all surround this "open field," which is how it is described by the media, implying that there is no threat to the residents.

Then we saw his family home, where his children were playing in the backyard. A family backyard, like so many others; yet, next to the rabbit hutch and children's toys stood the frightening remains of a Qassam rocket.

Nearby, we visited a new synagogue, created in a former store in an abandoned shopping centre. Congregation Doresh-Tov envisions a communal spiritual centre here, with Ashkenazi, Sephardi and Ethiopian synagogues, as well as recreation and play areas for all the children. The goal is to strengthen the connections for all the neighbourhood residents and enable the children to play "normally," like children everywhere.

The next stop was a poignant one – we went to see the memorial stone of two small Ethiopian children killed by a Qassam rocket while playing outside their homes on a quiet residential street. At a different time, another four-year-old boy had been killed on the way to his daycare centre with his mother, who had waited 10 long years to have a child. Ten years and one terrible moment – and then her precious little boy was gone.

A Sderot building damaged by a rocket strike from Gaza.

[Isranet photo]

At the outskirts of the town, we observed just how close the border to Gaza really is, a mere two kilometres away. We could also see the smokestacks of the city of Ashkelon, which is now, unfortunately, within Qassam range too.

Returning to the centre of town, we distributed the Chanukah gift baskets Connections Israel had arranged for the residents, the most enjoyable part of our whole visit. The residents were surprised and delighted to receive the gifts, but just as important to them was the knowledge that Jews around the world care.

We bought snacks and lunch from the small stores still struggling to survive here, despite the odds. Everyone thanked us for coming to give them support. And we in turn thanked them for being there – for all of us.

Just before we left, we saw an abandoned playground destroyed by a Qassam, with just the small, broken piece of a children's slide still remaining. But then, on the side of a bomb shelter, we read the triumphant words, "Am Yisrael Chai!" (The Jewish People Live!) And yes, we do, even in the brave, besieged little town named Sderot.

For more information on how you can show your support for the courageous people of Sderot by helping them build their community centre, please visit the website: www.connectionsisrael.com.

Menucha Levin is a former resident of Toronto who made aliyah a number of years ago.

"Neshama Carlebach is not only a great singer in her own right, but the reincarnation of a legend"
The Globe and Mail

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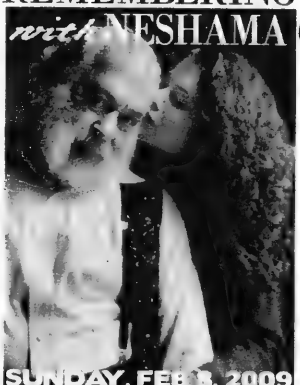

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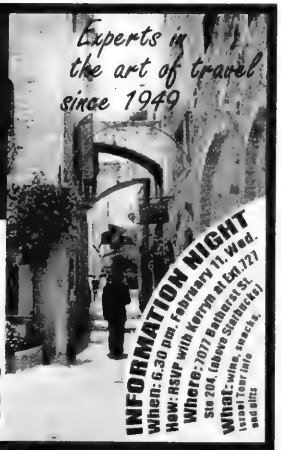
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CRUISES & CARIBBEAN ON SALE NOW!

In analysis, context is everything

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

On Dec. 29, two days after Israel launched its assault on Gaza, both the Globe and Mail and the New York Times presented what appeared to be much the same story. Both were front-page reports and both were presented as "analysis." But there the similarity ended.

Under the headline "Shock and Awe," the Globe and Mail's Patrick Martin argued that Israel is engaged in an effort to reassert its regional deterrence following what has been widely judged as the failure of the 2006 war against Hezbollah in Lebanon. Martin, however, struck a one-sided, judgmental tone: "Israel's massive assault on the militant Hamas organization in the Gaza Strip shook the Middle East this weekend. Few people expected Israel to deal such a blow, with such carnage, against a group whose repeated rocket attacks posed no existential threat to the powerful country."

Martin is wrong. The threat exists, and it's very real. In 2008 alone, nearly 3,000 rockets and mortars were fired from Gaza onto Israel's southern communities, terrorizing the civilians there and forcing many to live in or flee repeatedly to underground shelters. Even during the six-month "truce" between Israel and Hamas in the second half of 2008, the rocket fire continued, albeit on a much reduced scale of "only" three or four missiles every few days. This shelling had prompted Israel to temporarily close the crossings that allowed shipment of food and humanitarian supplies to Gaza's civilians.

When Hamas refused to renew the truce in mid-December, and then defiantly and dramatically accelerated the firing of rockets into Israel, Israel's leaders continued to exercise restraint.

Also unstated by Martin was the fact that Hamas used the truce period to smuggle Iranian-supplied long-range Katyushas and Grad rockets through tunnels from Egypt into Gaza. This increased both the range of Hamas' rocket punch to enable them to reach places in central Israel such as Yavne and the outskirts of Be'er Sheva, and the lethal power of each barrage.

On the issue of deterrence, Martin quoted and paraphrased Mark Heller of Tel Aviv University's Institute for National Security Studies: "'A big reason for this operation' isn't to wipe out Hamas or even to instil 'quiet' in southern Israel; 'it's to restore credibility in Israel's ability to deter enemies.'"

The impression lingered that if this was one reason for the assault, there were others that Martin failed to mention.

By contrast, in "With Strikes, Israel Reminds Foes It Has Teeth," the New York Times' Ethan Bronner made it clear, from his opening paragraph, that in addition to wanting to reassert its deterrence capacity, "Israel's military operation is aimed primarily at forcing Hamas to end its rocket barrages and military buildup."

He then went on to quote a senior Israeli military official, saying that Israel's aim is "to stop the firing against our civilians in the south and shape a different and new security situation there."

The implication was that not only is deterrence a reasonable justification for the assault, the protection of civilians is of even greater value.

Strikingly, Martin had evidently considered only an existential threat as a justification for war. In so doing, he disregarded and even denigrated the dangers hundreds of thousands of Israelis had been facing for eight years, since the first rocket was fired from Gaza into Israel.

Bronner wrote that "hundreds" were killed in Gaza. However, he noted that Israel was aiming at "devastating Hamas' resources," not at committing "carnage."

He went on to make it clear that Israel had approached its task methodically: "The Israeli military had mapped out Hamas bases, training camps and missile storage houses and systematically hit them simultaneously in an Israeli version of 'shock and awe,' the sudden delivery of overwhelming force" that led to the deaths of "scores of Hamas men." Indeed, Israel has made every effort to avoid harming Gaza's civilians, even though Hamas deliberately hides its military assets in their midst.

Like Martin, Bronner quoted Heller about Israel's attempts to assert its deterrence. But it's very clear in the context of Bronner's piece that deterrence is secondary to the immediate goal of eliminating the Hamas threat to Israel's southern communities. Context is everything. Bronner's piece alone provided it.

Paul Michaels is communication director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

Dozens of tanks, armoured personnel carriers and various other items of mobile equipment have been deployed along the Gaza border. *[Israel photo]*

Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University (CFYU)

The Yeshiva University family is deeply grieved by the passing of a widely admired young Woman of Valor, respected Baalat Chessed

RIVA KOSCHITZKY ע"ז

She was the wife of Joel Koschitzky, the daughter of Annette and Joey Colton of Montreal, the cherished daughter-in-law of Mira and Saul Koschitzky, YU Benefactors, of Toronto, and the beloved mother of Yedidia, Yekutiel, and Amitai.

May the entire Koschitzky-Colton family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem

Richard M. Joel
President, Yeshiva University

Dr. Norman Lamm
Chancellor, Yeshiva University

Morry J. Weiss
Chairman, YU Board of Trustees

Dr. Herbert C. Dobrinsky
Vice President for University Affairs, YU

Eli Rubinstein
National President, CFYU

Samuel Z. Eltes
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Kurt Rothschild
Toronto President, CFYU

Mo Lidsky
National Director, CFYU

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Oil industry insider predicts future energy crisis

By ADRIANNE FITCH
Special to The CJN

VANCOUVER — Canada could become the next energy superpower by exploiting its vast oil sand deposits, an industry insider said recently.

However, a lack of leadership, efficiency and engineering expertise have inflated mining costs and held the industry back, said Sam Spanglet, a former vice-president of Oil Sands Shell and a former president of Albian Sands.

Spanglet, born in Germany and educated in Israel, spoke to about 30 Vancouver business executives last month at a luncheon at the Terminal City Club. The luncheon was part of the Albert Einstein Business Forums, hosted by the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University (CFHU) of Jerusalem. Co-chaired by alumni Gary Segal and Randy Milner, the forums were created to highlight the connection between science and business at Hebrew U.

Spanglet said that a recent drop in oil prices, from $147 to $40 a barrel within three months, was a sign of short-sightedness and economic panic.

"It was an overreaction – the world hasn't changed that much. Destruction of supply is what's really going on. Oil is a finite product, and every-day the world produces less than the day before. I believe we are setting ourselves up for a huge supply destruction."

Economic panic has stopped development in oil exploration, further endangering supply, Spanglet noted. Declining gas prices encourage waste, as drivers hop back into their SUVs and Cadillacs, and harm the environment, he said.

"It's easy to blame big industry for the environment. But as individuals we are less responsible to the environment than oil companies. We are very selfish. We don't think three months in advance – we only think about yesterday and today."

Spanglet added that while we have information about oil reserves in North America, all we know about Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States is what they tell us. "If you want to believe them, be my guest," he said. "I believe their oil reserves are far less than what they claim."

Given the probability of an impending energy crisis, Canada is poised to become a huge player in the oil business, said Spanglet. Northern Alberta's oil sands contain more than 350 billion barrels of crude oil, second only to Saudi Arabia's reserves.

The advantage to oil sand mining is that deposits are visible at ground level, eliminating the financial risk of exploration, Spanglet said.

Disadvantages are the huge financial and environmental costs of drilling, pumping and treating the thick, viscous oil (also known as bitumen), separating it from sand and converting it into usable fuel, he said.

Mining, processing and construction costs are out of control, said Spanglet, because of bad management and a lack of leadership, efficiency and engineering competency.

He said Canada's oil industry has been lax in rewarding excellence and punishing poor performance. "Most of the workers hate to perform badly – they want to be successful. But leadership is not doing their part."

Answers to environmental and economic challenges may very well lie in scientific research, a top priority for the Hebrew U. The university's four campuses conduct 43 per cent of Israel's biotechnology research and more than one-third of its academic scientific research overall.

Hebrew U ranks fourth in academic research institution in the Asia-Pacific region and 65th worldwide. Because of the university's excellence, Israel is ranked 12th worldwide in academic research.

What does that mean for business?

In 2007, Hebrew U's revenues of $51 million were comparable to those of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's revenues of $61 million and Stanford University's revenues of $50 million. Hebrew U's net research budget is $107 million, while MIT's is $1.2 billion and Stanford's is $1 billion.

Hebrew U's scientific achievements include:

• Exelon, an FDA-approved drug for treating Alzheimer's disease and dementia. (2007 sales were $632 million.)

• Doxil, an anti-cancer drug with an innovative delivery system. (2007 sales were $417 million.)

• Drip irrigation techniques that increase food crop production while decreasing water consumption.

• Mobile Eye, an advanced vision-based driver-assistance system that prevents accidents. (2007 valuation was $600 million.)

• Cherry tomato, the world's most popular cocktail hybrid for greenhouse production. (2007 sales were $73 million)

Dina Wachtel, the executive director of CFHU's western region, said that the Einstein business forums aim to help publicize Hebrew U's enormous contributions to both science and business.

In 1925, Einstein was one of the founders of the Hebrew U, she said. Einstein served on Hebrew University's first board of governors, delivered its inaugural scientific lecture and edited its first collection of scientific papers.

PASSING THE GAVEL: Upper Canada Lodge of B'nai Brith Canada recently held its 61st installation of officers in one of the organization's senior citizens buildings on Bathurst Street. One of the oldest B'nai Brith lodges (1946) in Toronto, its members are proud of their many accomplishments over the years. Here, outgoing president Franklin Switzer, right, passes the gavel to incoming president and charter member Albert Waisglass *[Myer Gordon photo]*

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Edmonton's new rabbi follows in parents' footsteps

By IRENA KARSHENBAUM
Special to The CJN

EDMONTON — It's probably safe to say that being a rabbi is not on the career list of most little girls, but Rabbi Carmit Harari says she came to the decision honestly.

When she was four, her father was in one of the first graduating classes of the Israeli rabbinical program at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, and her mother was a Jewish educator.

"I grew up in the field," she said.

What made it more remarkable is that when Rabbi Harari, now 31, was living in Israel and in her first year of rabbinical studies, her mother applied to the same program – part of Hebrew Union College – and both mother and daughter were ordained as rabbis within a few months of each other.

Rabbi Harari is now serving Edmonton's Temple Beth Ora, a 90-family congregation that was founded 29 years ago.

Her parents live in a suburb of Chicago where her father is a full-time rabbi, and from which her mother commutes to a congregation in Jackson, Tenn., where she is a part-time rabbi.

Rabbi Harari is the third female rabbi to serve the Edmonton congregation in the past 12 years.

"The congregation was looking for the best rabbi to serve its needs. I've never experienced anything negative in that I am a woman," she said.

She said that since she started in September, she has taken on a full range of responsibilities in addition to her rabbinical duties. She is teaching adult Jewish education courses and teaching in a day school, is involved in various interfaith activities and working with the other congregations in Edmonton.

Through her work, she said, she hopes "to bring meaning to people's Jewish experience."

For the Haifa-born rabbi, coming to Edmonton has most certainly been a long journey, but one she has adapted to well.

"I grew up being exposed to a plethora of Jewish experiences. I felt very comfortable coming here.

"My congregation has a tag line, 'traditional values, contemporary focus,' that in a nutshell can typify my feelings. That's why I connected almost immediately with the congregation, and with the Reform movement in North America."

Rabbi Carmit Harari [*Tamara Stecyk photo*]

Montreal-area shul celebrates 50 years

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — At one time, there were three simchahs nearly every weekend at the Young Israel of Chomedey Synagogue, usually a couple of bar mitzvahs and a wedding.

Today, the shul is home to a couple of seniors clubs, and bingo isn't held there anymore because of the no-smoking law.

In its heyday in the 1960s through to the mid-1970s, the Young Israel had nearly 900 members, and was a bustling place. Now there are 275 names on its roster, and about half of these people do not live in the area anymore.

A few stalwarts such as president Jerry Baranoff and longtime member Nathan Yacowar devote themselves to keeping the 50-year-old synagogue going.

Down but not out, the congregation is still in the mood to party. Yacowar is heading the anniversary celebrations, which will culminate in a gala dinner on Aug. 30 at the synagogue. He is extending invitations to all past members or descendants of members, as well as the many others who were touched by the Young Israel, to attend.

The Young Israel was founded by 30-odd young families from the city that settled in the new suburban development attracted by its cheaper housing prices and wide-open spaces. The area, on the southwest of Ile-Jésus, was then known as St. Martin, the unlikely location of what would become a thriving Jewish community.

The municipality of Chomedey would come into existence in 1961, as a result of a merger, and then be incorporated into the new city of Laval in 1965.

"We were the 12 and 5 crowd – the average bungalow went for $12,500," said Yacowar, who has been a Young Israel member since 1959.

Initially called the Jewish Congregation of St. Martin, the synagogue's first home of its own was a bungalow on Romiti Street and the first president was Joseph Spector. The basement served as the daily and Shabbat chapel, while the upstairs was used for a nursery, kindergarten and afternoon Hebrew school.

The community grew so rapidly that it soon became obvious the little house would not do for much longer. Although they were struggling to pay their own mortgages, the members pledged $100,000 to build a synagogue on its current site on Elizabeth Boulevard and hired a rabbi, Solomon Spiro, from Yeshiva University, who would remain with the congregation for 33 years.

The building was completed in 1961, and the congregation joined the Zionist-oriented Orthodox Young Israel movement.

The community was growing so rapidly that by the time the synagogue was finished it was already too small, and an auditorium was completed four years later. The current sanctuary was added in 1972.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Matisyahu, who recently spent a morning at Hillel's Wolfond Centre at U of T just hours before performing a concert, told students he feels a responsibility to represent core Jewish values through his music [Daniel Abramson and Jon Cohen photos]

Matisyahu dropped into Hillel to eat, pray and talk about living a Jewish life

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Since he successfully made the unlikely crossover of reggae and hip hop with traditional Jewish themes, Matisyahu, who has been a source of pride for the Jewish community since he burst onto the music scene in 2004, said he feels a responsibility to represent Judaism through his music.

"Basically, God gives you different opportunities and God gave me the opportunity to make music and not have to do anything else besides that so I feel like I have a responsibility to create music that is spiritual and representative of the core Jewish values," said Matisyahu, who was in Toronto last month on the last leg of his North American tour.

Matisyahu rose to international fame in 2006 with the release of his second album, Youth, which peaked at number 4 on the Billboard 200 and has sold more than one million copies.

And to the delight of about 40 students, the six-foot-four Orthodox reggae superstar came to Hillel of Greater Toronto's Wolfond Centre for Jewish Campus Life for a shacharit service, a brunch and a Q and A, just hours before he took the stage at the Phoenix Concert Theatre in Toronto .

"I got tired of davening all the time on the back of a tour bus in hotels and stuff like that. I felt that if I could get a minyan and daven everyday it would be healthy for me, spiritually," said Matisyahu, who indulged the gathering by answering questions about his life, his music and his spirituality, after taking some time to schmooze with the students while snacking on party sandwiches and orange juice.

On his journey from a secular Jewish upbringing in White Plains, N.Y. as Matthew Paul Miller, to a high school dropout who followed rock band Phish across the United States on a tour while experimenting with drugs, to a meeting with a rabbi who introduced him to a world of religious spirituality, it seems like the long, lean, and bearded 29-year-old musician has managed to stay true to his free-spirited, uninhibited self.

"My life is more that of a religious Jew than a celebrity in the sense that I always had my fantasies of what I thought a celebrity's life would be like and my life is not like that at all," he said.

"I'm married, I have kids, and I kind of have a religious lifestyle even when I'm on the road... I never really get too separated from [Judaism]. I feel it keeps me grounded."

> 'I always had my fantasies of what I thought a celebrity's life would be like and my life is not like that at all'

Matisyahu, who was on tour with his wife and two kids and was spending his nights in Toronto with his wife's grandmother who lives in the city, didn't always feel a connection to Judaism.

He said that as a child, he was sent to Hebrew school, but couldn't relate to it.

"Being told that this is what Judaism is and that when you go to Hebrew school you have to conform to this... When you're a kid there is a psychological process of separation, of pulling away and then figuring out the world on your own terms," he said.

"I found along the way... in Judaism, there are so many aspects and elements and differing philosophies and ideas and ways of expressing those within the Jewish context. So for me, it was about trying to figure out where I thought my identity or my truth lies within Judaism."

He added that he didn't start exploring his Jewish heritage until he took his first trip to Israel.

"When I was 16, I went to Israel and that was a jumping off point for me. When I started to become religious when I was about 20 or 21, I was in college and that was when I also really started to explore Judaism. I don't know if [this] is what made it unique for me or what made a big difference for me, but I've never been able to explore things from just a purely intellectual place, objectively or separately. I've always somehow pulled it in my actual life."

For example, he said that when he wanted to learn what Shabbat was about, he wanted to experience Shabbat by observing it, rather than just read about the concept of it.

And when he is on the road, he makes sure to schedule his tour dates around Shabbat and Jewish holidays because he can observe wherever he goes.

"Let's say we're at Bonnaroo, a music festival in Tennessee, and I'm playing on Saturday and Sunday," Matisyahu said.

"I call my friends, I get like six of my friends to come down, we get a Torah, we get food, we get permission, we set up a big tent and we invite whoever wants to come. We get two-, three-, four- 500 people. We did one where there was this huge storm in the middle of the night and... people's tents were being blown away, so they came to the Shabbos tent. The tent was overflowing with people on all kinds of hallucinogens at like 4:00 a.m. I was asleep, but the rabbi told me," he said with a laugh.

With music and religion such a significant part of his adolescence, Matisyahu said the connection between the two came to him naturally.

"In terms of a connection between reggae and Judaism, reggae music... takes ideas from the Old Testament and puts them to music," he said.

"It is able to bring out certain ideas from Judaism and portray them in a way that is extremely powerful. That was one of my initial draws to reggae music and everything that goes along with it, and being 14 years old and listening to Bob Marley."

Matisyahu's third album, Light, is scheduled to be released in March.

Go from your strengths and have a fantastic year!

Life Coach Corner
Judy Siblin-Librach

If you want this to be your best year ever, I have a couple of ideas you can add to your tool kit to start the year off in a spectacular new way.

For one thing, have the intention to begin anew and silence the "yeah, buts" that creep into your heart and mind. Believe that you have a fresh page, and write the script of what would make this your best year ever.

Then begin by thinking of the activity that energizes you and draws you in, the one you would do for free, that makes you excited and nervous, and in spite of that, it's the one you continuously feel a pull toward doing.

A fascinating new book by Marcus Buckingham, Go Put Your Strengths To Work: 6 Powerful Steps to Achieve Outstanding Performance, is the perfect way to carve out a brilliant new way of becoming happy and successful in your life, your work and your contribution to the world. The premise of Buckingham's book is that he teaches you to push yourself toward activities that strengthen you and avoid those that drag you down and drain you.

"You will grow the most in your areas of greatest strength. Your strengths magnify you," he writes.

A typical scenario in a job performance evaluation is that two minutes are spent talking about what you did really well. The remaining 58 minutes deal with your weaknesses. Ironically, when you focus on your strengths, or your employees' strengths, and begin from that vantage point, chances of extraordinary success are much greater.

There is an incredible example in the book where Buckingham writes about a brilliant swimmer, Matt Borden, who was blessed with the ability to swim like a "human fish." He won multiple awards and events ranging from sprints to long-distance relays. The problem was, he began to loathe swimming, was having terrible migraine headaches, and had stopped feeling any joy when he entered a swimming pool. He was surprised something he was so good at made him feel so bad. But there was something else Matt loved, which was playing guitar and writing music.

He gave up swimming and pursued his passion for music, and now he is a successful and very happy music producer who owns a studio in California.

The formula in the book for finding out what your strengths are uses the acronym SIGN.

S is for success, Buckingham says, and refers to something that makes you feel recharged and creative, where the activity fulfils and sustains and energizes you – never drains you.

The I is for instinct, and your strengths have "an I-can't-help-but" quality to them. You can't quite articulate why, but you find yourself drawn to certain activities repeatedly, even though you may be just a little scared of them: "Maybe I'm not good enough, maybe I'll fail." But in spite of that, you still feel a pull toward them.

G is for growth. You feel "happiness and focus. It feels easy. It feels like you're not trying very hard. It's the activity you want to practise, to read up on, to refine with new tricks and techniques to grow. You feel challenged. You are lost in the activity for a long time."

N is for needs, and instead of feeling psychologically drained after the activity, you feel "fulfilled, powerful, restored, the exact opposite of drained."

So the book attempts to help you as the reader capture, clarify and confirm what your strengths are.

The author suggests a great exercise – you carry around a notebook for the next week, with the following instructions: every time you find yourself doing something that makes you feel one of the strength adjectives, write down what the activity was.

So the strength words are "powerful, confident, natural, smooth, on fire, high, I've got this wired, great, authentic, that was easy, awesome and when can I do this again?"

Then do the same for the weakness words, which are "drained, time's going by so slowly, I can't concentrate, frustrated, wiped out, forced, I'm getting a migraine, how much longer?, irritated, bored, why can't the new guy do this?"

You will know very quickly which activities energize you and which drain you.

I wish you all that you will get more engaged in your strengths this year and move toward that which makes you feel awake, alive, happy, excited and in your bliss.

Wishing you all a very happy and healthy new year. I do think it's going to be your best year ever!

Judy Siblin-Librach is an Adler-trained coach. Website: www.findingyourbliss.com; e-mail: judyelle@ican.net

GRANDPARENTS MEET: The organizing committee of Bialik Hebrew Day School's Grandparent and Special Friends Association had lots of reason to kvell after the launch of their new initiative. Pictured at the launch are committee members and proud Bialik grandparents, from left, association chair Sandy Brown with Sue Freedman and Ziona Hagler.

Pursuing additional child support

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator for 26 years

Question: Last year my ex and I agreed to terms of separation which included (nominal) child support arrangements and access. The agreement was handwritten by me and signed by both of us, but not witnessed. He agreed to pay half the cost of a divorce if I declined to go after additional support. The agreement was never filed with the courts and the application for divorce has not been filed yet either. Are these legally binding documents or can I pursue additional support?

Answer: You can definitely pursue additional support. A domestic contract, such as a separation agreement, cohabitation agreement, or marriage contract is only enforceable if it is made in writing, signed by both parties and witnessed. Even then, if the amount of child support you agreed upon did not follow the Child Support Guidelines, then a court may not be obliged to enforce the agreement, unless it is given good reason to do so. The Guidelines provide for basic monthly child support and special or "extraordinary" payments for extras based on your income as compared to your partner's. The basic "table" amount payable is determined by a chart found on the internet or in booklets from the government. The basic "table: monthly payment" is determined by (a) the gross pre-tax yearly income of the non-custodial parent, and is usually found at line 150 of his tax return; (b) the number of dependent children the parents have between them; and (c) the province in which the paying spouse resides.

For instance, if your Ontario husband earns $50,000 gross in 2004, then for one child the grid for child support under the Guidelines shows that he should be paying $429. If you have daycare / nanny or other "extra" expenses of $1,000 monthly and earn 25 percent of your total combined gross incomes (i.e. yours plus your ex husband's), then he would pay an additional $750 monthly and you would pay the remaining $250.

The same formula applies to orthodontics, summer camp, post-secondary tuition, non-OHIP healthcare and some extracurricular activities like hockey. But half the cost of an uncontested divorce is about $750. It's nothing to worry about, especially if your signatures weren't witnessed. Also if you didn't have a Certificate of Independent Legal Advice from your own lawyer before you signed, along with full financial disclosure from your husband/partner, then the whole agreement is completely unenforceable on those grounds alone.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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Feature

No hostilities reported at Toronto demonstration

Continued from page 1

Both the CTV and the Toronto Star reported police presence at the demonstration, but no hostilities.

Though he couldn't confirm numbers, Meir Weinstein, the JDL's national director, said he believed his group was able to get somewhere between 250 and 300 people to Saturday's protest to show solidarity with Israel, and it organized an "emergency" meeting late Sunday to streamline his organization's response to growing pro-Palestinian activities in the city and to cobble together more volunteers for future protests.

"We had over 50 Israeli flags there and many more people not holding flags," he said. "We're looking for faster mobilization so we can have greater numbers at upcoming protests."

Asked whether the latest protests were different than initial ones his group attended last week, Weinstein said he'd noticed a more intense "anti-Jewish" sentiment among the pro-Palestinian contingent.

"We hear people chanting 'The ovens weren't big enough!' 'Death to Jews,' 'Slaughter the Jews,' and Israeli flags are being burned," he said, adding that the JDL advised its supporters "not to engage" directly with pro-Palestinian demonstrators.

Israel's backers should "just stand up for Israel. Wave your flag if you have one and support Israel to go all the way," Weinstein said.

In Montreal on Sunday, about 5,000 people marched against Israel's Gaza offensive, calling on the Harper government to change its position in support of Israel.

The three-hour event was noisy, but police reported no incidents.

The demonstration began at Cabot Square, at the corner of Atwater and Ste. Catherine streets, and proceeded to the Israeli consulate in Westmount Square and on to Phillips Square.

The most well-known speaker was newly elected MNA Amir Khadir, co-leader of the new Québec Solidaire party, who said: "The Palestinian people as well as the Israeli people are taken hostage by the situation of violence…

"The Israeli military has ruled Israel for 50 years and has interests in maintaining war and violence," he added.

"In Israel there is an elite, political and military, that benefits from instability and war… [Prime Minister Stephen] Harper is just playing the game of these military rulers by blindly supporting the Israeli government."

Khadir also took part in two earlier, much smaller, demonstrations, including one Jan. 2 where Israel's "apartheid" was denounced, as well as another on Dec. 28 where Khadir is reported to have said that both Palestinians and Israelis are victims of the "warmongering policies of the Zionist state."

The Quebec-Israel Committee (QIC) said it was troubled by the "hateful character" of the demonstration, noting that there were repeated calls for the "murder of Jews" made in Arabic ("*al-mawt al-Yahud*").

In addition, an Israeli flag was set on fire in front of the Israeli consulate.

"The violent and anti-Semitic rhetoric of numerous demonstrators echoes the radical Islamic speech that plagues the Middle East and has no place in Quebec and flouts the civic values of Quebec society," QIC executive director Luciano Del Negro said in a statement.

Pro-Israel demonstrators on Dec. 28 in downtown Toronto. *[Rochelle Michaels photo]*

In a statement Sunday, Frank Dimant, B'nai Brith Canada's executive vice president, defended Israel's continued operations in Gaza and exhorted the international community to "follow Canada's principled stance" on the situation by recognizing Hamas as the instigator of the conflict.

"For years, the terrorist group Hamas has ruthlessly and deliberately targeted Israel's civilian population," he said. "No sovereign state can stand idly by and allow a terrorist group to launch rockets against its citizens with impunity, nor allow it the means to re-arm and enhance its weapons capability, as has been the case with Hamas ever since Israel unilaterally evacuated the area."

Speaking to The CJN on Monday, Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC) – who witnessed the weekend demonstration in Ottawa – said his organization had alerted officials about the disturbing "tone and substance" of the rhetoric being chanted at protests across the country.

"The kind of language being used, 'Death to the Jews,' is the kind we haven't heard since the [start of the second intifadah] in 2000," he said. "The common element is support for Hamas, but nothing akin to genuine concern for the plight of Palestinians living under Hamas."

Fogel said CIC has worked hard to explain Israel's situation and expressed gratitude to all Canadian political parties for recognizing that Hamas is "the root" of the problem and the "immediate precipitant" of the Israeli offensive.

He said the Canadian political sector understands "pretty much unanimously" that Israel "could no longer accept or tolerate the chronic launching of missiles" against its citizenry.

Fogel added: "Israel had the obligation to respond, lest Hamas and others begin to contemplate that there was a new threshold of tolerance for the kind of terror they author.

"But larger than that… the reactions that are coming forward from the Arab world [show] they have drawn the conclusion that Israel is no longer the real enemy. The fight has moved from an Arab-Israeli conflict to one of extremism versus Arab nationalism. What they are saying, all of them quietly, some of them less quietly, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Jordan and Morocco, even [Palestinian Authority President] Mahmoud Abbas… they're saying 'We can't make common cause with Islamic extremism as defined and exported through Iran.' That relates to Hamas, Hezbollah and things happening in southeast Asia."

Abbas has said that Hamas could have prevented Israel's attack on Gaza and has called on it to renew its ceasefire with Israel.

Nationwide rallies in support of Israel have been scheduled for this evening to show support for Israel's southern cities, whose citizens have been targets of Hamas rockets for the past eight years.

In Toronto, the rally will be held at the Beth Tzedec Syragogue, at 1700 Bathurst St., as a joint effort by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy, Canadian Jewish Congress, the CIC and the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee.

In Montreal, Federation CJA will hold its rally at the Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation, at 6800 Mackle Rd.

With files from Janice Arnold

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The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

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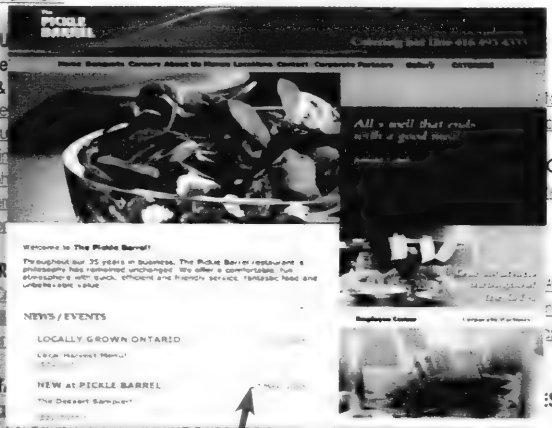

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov
The Canadian Jewish news

Best wishes to Aubie Himmel on his 80th birthday on Jan. 12. From his loving wife Lorraine, children and grandchildren.

Happy ninth anniversary Mommy & Daddy (Adam & Corinne). Love from your daughters Tarah and Caleigh and your parents.

Happy second birthday, Caleigh! Love from your big sister, Tarah Ainsley.

Happy seventh birthday, Tarah! Love from your baby sister, Caleigh Ariel.

As featured on onlysimchas!
Celebrating Jewish Life
www.onlysimchas.com

Mazel tov on the recent wedding of Michelle Kraut & Steven Farbman.

Mazel tov on the recent engagement of Adam Greenberg & Eliza Devorah Zdanowitz.

We're looking for recently married couples and those planning a wedding to share your story with CJN readers.

Tell us how you got engaged, about your wedding plans, or how you spent your honeymoon.

Your story could run in our upcoming bridal supplement!

Send submissions, about 350-450 words plus photo by Jan. 5 to cblackman@cjnews.com

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What's New deadlines: Monday, Jan.12 is the deadline for the Jan. 22 issue and Monday, Jan. 19 is the deadline for the Jan. 29 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Friday, Jan. 9

LONDON SHABBAT SERVICE

Join Temple Israel of London for Shabbat service. 8 p.m. 519-858-4400

Sunday, Jan. 11

YIDDISH FOR ADULTS

The Committee For Yiddish, UJA Federation offers Yiddish language classes for adults at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Conversation, reading and writing are included at each level. All classes take place Sundays, 10 a.m.-noon, beginning today through March 29 at the Bathurst JCC. $125/12 sessions. Info and registration contact **Ethel Cooper**, ecooper@ujafed.org or 416 635-2883, ext. 5389.

WHERE ARE THE MEN

Temple Har Zion presents **Rabbi Cory Weiss** on "Where Have All the Men Gone: Bringing Men Back Into the Reform Community" 10:30 a.m. at Leo Baeck School. 905-889-2252

Monday, Jan. 12

FILM: YOUNG@HEART

Baycrest screens the film *Young@Heart*, about the Young@Heart Chorus with members ages 81-90+ who toured the world, walkers and oxygen tanks in tow, and performed to sold out crowds. 1:30-3:30 p.m. Register, 416-785-2500, ext. 3374 or lkamenitz@baycrest.org.

RELIGION 101

Beth Emeth and Beth Tikvah Synagogues host a series on different religions with **Rabbi Wayne Allen**. Tonight, "Catholicism" at Beth Emeth 8 p.m. 416-221-3433.

NOT OPTED OUT

Beth Tikvah Men's Club hosts this monthly meeting for family or friends of inter-dating, or inter-married couples who would like support or information. All welcome. Discussions are discreet and confidential. Meetings are attended by a professional facilitator, **Andrea Litvack**. 8 p.m. Information, **Moe Horenfeldt** in confidence, 905-508-0135 or mhorenf@idirect.com.

Tuesday, Jan.13

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY

Beth Tikvah Synagogue Tuesday afternoon movie series with **Larry Anklewicz** continues with the film *Freedom Writers*. $5. 416-221-3433

JEWISH THINKERS

Temple Har Zion presents **Rabbi Michael Stroh**'s ongoing discussion of Jewish thinkers and their impact on our world and on our personal lives as Jews focusing on the conflict between faith and reason. 7:30 p.m. 905-889-2252

MORE OBSERVANT CHILDREN

Beth David Sisterhood presents **Rabbi Philip Scheim** on "My Child Has Become Much More Observant Than Me," bring you questions and stories to share. 8 p.m. Non-members $5. 416-633-5500

HELP ME W/ MY CHILD

Goldie Plotkin leads an interactive parenting workshop, "Help Me Understand My Child." 8-10 p.m. $20, $30/couple. RSVP, 905-886-0420, ext. 227.

Wednesday, Jan. 14

THE FEMININE PALETTE

Chabad Uptown offers an evening of kosher culinary delights for women with celebrity chef **Susie Fishbein**, author of *Kosher by Design*. The evening includes a cooking demonstration, entrees and appetizers. 7 p.m. at the Baycrest Terrace. $54. RSVP, 416-635-9696 or www.uptownchabad.com.

Continued on page 25

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Continued from page 24

Other News

DAVENING SKILLS

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation skills series continues Thursday, Jan. 15 with "Torah and Haftorah." 7 p.m. 416-789-3213, ext. 202

KOL AMI TRIVIA NIGHT

Temple Kol Ami is holding a trivia night event, Saturday, Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m. at the Leo Baeck Day School. $10. Information or to RSVP, contact 905-482-0445 or rlevenstein@rogers.com

JACS CONFERENCE

JACS hosts "Judaism and Recovery Hand in Hand," a conference where Jews in recovery, along with their family and friends, can join in a weekend of spiritual growth and awareness. The weekend will include ongoing meetings, workshops and speakers in a safe environment for Jews of all denominations. Feb. 27-March 1. Registration and info, 416-638-0350, ext. 221 or www.jacstoronto.org.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Registration is open for the Temple Emanu-El Spring Lecture Series on Mondays 2-4 p.m., except for April 20 which will be at 1:30 p.m. April 20, "Are You Conscious" with **Jay Ingram**.; April 27, "Facing the Dragon: China in International Relations Today" with **Arne Kislenko**.; May 4, "**Maria Callas**, The Greatest of all Sopranos?" with **Iain Scott**; May 11, "The American Presidency-After Bush" with **Hugh Innes**. $30 for the series or $10/lecture. Information call 416-449-3880.

JIAS TORONTO

Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, 4600 Bathurst St. #325. www.jias-toronto.org. To register, volunteer, or for more information on these programs call 416-630-6481.

Telephone Language Companions. Volunteers needed to practise English with newcomers over the phone from your home. Call **Lea**, ext. 31.

JUMPStart. If you have a volunteer, mentorship or job opportunity in the skilled labour market for a newcomer call **Simone**, ext. 24.

Family-to-Family. Welcome newcomer families and provide informal advice and orientation to our community. To participate call **Joanna**, ext. 30.

Homework Club. Volunteer tutors needed for a homework club for middle and high school immigrants. Wednesday nights in Thornhill. Russian or Hebrew helpful. Call **Joanna**, ext. 30.

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child Service. 4600 Bathurst St. Information/registration 416-638-7800 or www.jfandcs.com. Call **Shawna** ext. 215 for info and registration.

How to Talk With Your Ex So You Get What You Need: A two session workshop to learn effective communication and listening skills in order to better deal with an ex- spouse and issues around parenting and the children. Tuesday, Jan. 20 and 27, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Promenade Mall, #313. $54.

FOR SENIORS

Chai Society at Beth Sholom Synagogue, Lunch and Learn program hosts **Loretta Tanenbaum**, Wednesday, Jan. 14, noon. $8. To reserve call 416-783-6103.

The Association of Jewish Seniors' host **Steven Shulman** on "United Jewish Appeal and the Israel Connection" on Thursday, Jan. 15 at 1:30 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. To reserve call **Tammy**, 416-635-2860.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. hosts **Adam Fuerstenberg** on "**Leonard Cohen**: Troubador of Love and Pain," his life as reflected in poetry and song. Thursday Jan. 15 at 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155

Earl Bales Seniors Club In The Park. Casino Rama, Wednesday, Jan. 14, Movie Day, Thursday, Jan. 15, 1 p.m. $2; Conversational Hebrew, Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-noon; Bingo, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m.; Call Tuesday-Thursday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112. Register now for:

"Life Lessons in Parsha." Mondays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. $3, non-members, $6.

"Jews in the Lotus: The Attraction to Buddhism" with **Rabbi Michael Skobac**. Tuesday, Jan. 13, 10 a.m. $3, non members, $6.

"Broadway Musical and Jewish Composers" with **Morton Silverstone**. Mondays, Jan 19-Feb 23. $18, non members $36.

WAGMAN CENTRE

55 Ameer Ave. 416-785-2500.

The Book Club meets Thursday, Jan. 22, 1:30 p.m. Members receive a copy of a book to read one month prior to each program. Register at ext. 22

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Register now for winter classes and workshops in visual arts, music and dance for all ages at the Koffler Centre for the Arts. Ext. 269.

Red Cross Babysitter's Course, Sunday Jan. 18, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. $49. Register, ext. 235.

The Jewish Discovery Museum offers the following new programs:

"Shabbat Club," 3-5 years olds sing songs, tell stories, make challah, play games and do Shabbat crafts. Children will come home each week with crafts and songs to share. Fridays, 9:45-11:15 a.m. beginning January 9. Registration, ext. 390.

"My Hebrew Picnic," share Hebrew with your newborn-2 years old child through music, puppets and games. Beginners and native Hebrew speakers welcome. Mondays, 10-10:45 a.m., begins Jan. 19.

Support group for children of Holocaust survivors facilitated by **Rose Heilbronn**. Open to second generation, adult children and their families. Fee. 6 sessions begins Jan. 12. Info, 416-457-1315 or ext. 235.

Adult Hour @ the Family Place. Spend an hour with parents, caregivers and experts. Thursdays 10:30-11:30 a.m. Each session stands alone and requires registration, some have a fee. Some programs include children, others are adult only, babysitting provided at BJCC. Info and registration, ext. 235.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

"Toronto Jewish Film Society 2009 season membership, 8 films, 7:30 p.m. screenings, $95, ages 18-29, $60. Info, joellem@mnjcc.org or ext. 139.

"Climate Change, Conflict and Peace in the Middle East" with **Stuart Schoenfeld**. Sunday, Jan. 18, 10-11:30 a.m. Info, joan@djcs.org or ext. 112.

Sundays on Bloor, music talk with **Jordan Klapman**, "Rock n' Roll Jews: **Doc Pomus** and **Mort Shuman**: Black, White, Blues and Rhythm" Sunday, Jan. 18, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. $9 per lecture drop-in - includes a light breakfast. Register, ext. 0.

Hebrew language courses, beginner, intermediate, conversation and grammar and Yiddish classes. $175, non members $200. Ext. 154.

"Taibele and Her Demon," **Lorie Wolf**'s musical and visual adaptation of **Isaac Bashevis Singer**'s classic short story with **Marilyn Lerner**. Sunday, Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre. Tickets, $15, $20 at the door, students and seniors $15. 1-888-655-9090 or www.ticketpro.ca.

GOODALL HONOURED: At the recent Haifa University Tribute Dinner in Toronto, Jane Goodall received an honorary degree in recognition of her global contribution to humanitarianism, to preserving the environment and for her activities on behalf of peace education. From left, Leon Charney, chairman of the university board of governors, Goodall and Prof. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, university president.

ALIYA SEMINAR ATTRACTS LARGE TURNOUT: The Israel Aliyah Centre of The Jewish Agency recently held a seminar which focused on the employment opportunities in Israel and the new Israeli tax reform. Over 150 people participated in the event which included Israeli representatives of high tech industry, medical community and education system and Liane Sela, the agency's *aliyah shlichah*. To find out more about aliyah opportunities contact, www.JewishAgency.org/canada, 1-877- WE GO 2 IL or 416-633-4766.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 18

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

John Ackerman	Dec 13/08	3560 Bathurst Street
Ben Libman	Dec 14/08	150 Heath Street West
Judith Hoffman	Dec 13/08	33 Delisle Avenue
Emma Morgen	Dec 12/08	17 Elderwood Drive
Katherine Ritter	Dec 13/08	1 Concorde Place
Harry Lewkowicz	Dec 14/08	80 Antibes Drive
Gerald Lipperman	Dec 15/08	299 Mullen Drive
Lillian Rubinoff	Dec 16/08	2 Covington Road
Jack Iron	Dec 17/08	58 Mabley Cres.
Nora Rudnick	Dec 17/08	10 Elderwood Dr.
Irving Paul Sussman	Dec 16/08	94 Old Forest Hill Road
Jack Gale	Dec 18/08	110 Promenade Circle
Sheila Ruderfer	Dec 17/08	260 Doris Ave
Samuel Kwinter	Dec 17/08	6 Pebble Beach Court
Booky Steinhauer	Dec 19/08	21 Tanbark Crescent
Norman Trachter	Dec 19/08	75 Brownstone Circle
Frances Joffe	Dec 16/08	866 Sheppard Avenue, West
Pearl Fruman	Dec 19/08	67 Invermarge Dr.
Rose Glowinsky	Dec 20/08	80 Antibes Drive
Ada Greenwood	Dec 20/08	1555 Finch Avenue East
Rene Bernstein	Dec 20/08	650 Briar Hill Avenue

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Deutsch, Joel Tibor	Dec. 22/08	Private
Lazar, Yetti	Dec. 20/08	Private
Afahova, Anna	Dec. 21/08	Private
Direktorova, Lilia	Dec. 19/08	Private
Weinles, Morris	Dec. 22/08	2 Neptune Dr
Moscoe, Esther	Dec. 22/08	Private
Friedman, William S	Dec. 19/08	
Fleischman, Anna	Dec. 22/08	
Polansky, Beatrice	Dec. 23/08	44 Diana Dr
Foltys, Milan	Dec. 23/08	85 Mill Arbour Lane
Zacks, Berenice	Dec. 23/08	407 Walmer Rd

HEBREW BASIC

Harry Bach	Dec 13/08	4701 Bathurst Street
Florence Sontz	Dec 19/08	25 Thornhill Summit Dr.
Sim Lash	Dec 19/08	35 Canyon Avenue
Stanley Iscove	Dec 19/08	370 Ridelle Avenue

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On Campus

Musical production raises funds for Feed the Children

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

When Mark Wise, chair of the board of Canadian Feed the Children, first asked Elan Panov and Brian Hartman to start a branch of the non-profit organization at the University of Western Ontario (UWO), the two science students eagerly accepted the challenge.

From left, Brian Hartman and Elan Panov, co-presidents of the Canadian Feed the Children chapter at University of Western Ontario, are holding a fundraiser that will premier the show The Facebook Musical, written and directed by Jonathan Blankenstein, who is seated at the piano.

"It was an opportunity for us to get involved with a charity that does international development work," says Panov, noting that Feed the Children offers social and economic assistance to communities living in poverty.

The students, both now in second year, took a year to learn about university life before launching the new campus charity.

"We didn't want to jump into anything in first year," Panov explains.

In the fall of 2008, he and Hartman signed up 120 members for the UWO branch of Canadian Feed the Children.

"We were amazed by the interest, especially for the first year of the club."

Now the campus is buzzing about the charity's major fundraising event.

Panov and Hartman's friend Jonathan Blankenstein – also a UWO student and their former classmate from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, Richmond Hill campus – has written an original Broadway-style production, The Facebook Musical, as a fundraiser for Canadian Feed the Children. It will debut at the McManus Theatre in London, Ont., on Jan. 18.

When the two founding co-presidents spoke to Blankenstein about their plans for the charity, he offered to write a musical for a fundraiser, Panov says.

"The script is amazing. It's very funny. It applies to everyday student life at the university," says Hartman, who can hardly contain his enthusiasm and passion for the charity and the show.

This passion dates back to high school, he says. "I was very active in various charities. I was the chair of fundraising at CHAR [TanenbaumChat's Richmond Hill campus] for two consecutive years."

He says the organizational work that went into setting up Feed the Children on campus was also an invaluable learning opportunity.

"I loved the challenge of starting a chapter of a charity from the ground-floor."

Hartman explains that much of the legwork for starting the chapter was done the year before.

"When I was the president of first-year students at Hillel, I had to meet with the university student council. I learned the system. My forte was doing this legwork.

"Elan and I complement each other's talent."

He says his responsibilities as the producer of the show have included finding a show venue, organizing volunteers, arranging ticket sales, publicizing the show and helping with the actual production.

"Being involved in the creative end of the fundraiser is a terrific outlet for me and other people involved."

Hartman says they first publicized the event – where else? – on Facebook.

"We broke the news on Dec. 17. When people heard about the idea, they demanded tickets."

Hartman has lots of praise for the show's creator.

"Jonathan is amazing to work with. He really is in a league of his own in terms of talent, intelligence and kindness. For a student of his age to write an original musical is unheard of. That's what makes him so special.

"We jokingly say he's a Renaissance man. He has the highest average in science, but music is his passion and the charity is the beneficiary. It's terrific how generous he is. He's a great friend and a great human being."

Blankenstein, for his part, says he is happy to donate his talent and time to the fundraiser, adding that his father Eric, a pianist and entrepreneur, is the show's co-sponsor.

The second-year science student says his goal is to become a Broadway composer.

"The Facebook Musical is an exploration of first-year university. I was aiming for an impactful piece that people of my generation can relate to."

Blankenstein shares Hartman and Panov's enthusiasm for the upcoming fundraiser.

"It's a win-win situation for all of us. I look forward to doing these shows, and what better way to do a show than with your friends, for charity."

To purchase tickets, contact bhartman@uwo.ca.

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• Past Issues and much more!

Egypt to demand Hamas accept immediate truce

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CAIRO — Egyptian officials said Monday that Cairo was set to demand an immediate ceasefire from Hamas in the Gaza Strip, as Israeli forces moved into their 10th day of a military offensive on the coastal territory.

Hamas planned to send a delegation to Egypt on Monday for the first diplomatic talks since the launch of a 10-day-old Israel Defence Forces offensive in Gaza, an official of the Islamist group has said.

Hamas official Ayman Taha said a Hamas delegation would head to Cairo "answering an Egyptian invitation to hold discussions." A senior Palestinian official said on Friday that Egypt had launched contacts with Hamas to reach a truce.

The Hamas visit to Egypt would coincide with the expected visit there of French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who has also launched a European-backed diplomatic push for a ceasefire. Taha didn't say whether the delegation would include Hamas members from Gaza or elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday accused Israel of committing "inhuman" acts in Gaza that would cause it to self-destruct.

In an interview with Al-Jazeera television, Erdogan said Israel hurt its relations with Turkey by attacking Gaza and will be punished.

Israel launched a ground offensive deep into Gaza on Saturday in an effort to stop rocket attacks from the Hamas-controlled strip, which have traumatized southern Israel. More than 500 Palestinians have been killed since the operation began, at least a quarter of them civilians, a UN agency said.

In the wake of his visit to the Middle East on Monday, Erdogan voiced his support of Hamas and said Turkey would act as a mediator between the Islamist organization and the United Nations Security Council. He further stressed that Israel was responsible for violating the six-month ceasefire with Hamas by keeping the coastal strip blockaded.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Monday urged the divided Security Council to work toward a speedy end to the escalating crisis in Gaza, and he planned to meet Monday with Arab ministers flying to New York to press for an immediate halt to the violence.

Late Saturday, the United States blocked approval of a Security Council statement calling for an immediate ceasefire and expressing serious concern at the escalation of violence after Israeli tanks and artillery began a ground assault on Hamas-ruled Gaza, council diplomats said.

In a statement released Sunday, Ban said: "Given the crucial juncture at which we have arrived in the search for a ceasefire, I appeal to all members of the international community to display the unity and commitment required to bring this escalating crisis to an end."

On Sunday, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas denounced Israel's ground operation as "brutal aggression."

Smoke billows from a tunnel in Rafah on Gaza's border with Egypt following an Israeli air strike on the area on Dec. 28. Jets bombed a series of tunnels on the Gaza-Egypt border — a lifeline for Hamas used for smuggling in goods and weapons into the enclave, which has been virtually sealed by Israel since the Islamists violently seized power in June 2007. *[Abed Rahim Khatib / FLASH90 photo]*

Gaza invasion 'defensive,' EU says

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PRAGUE — The Czech Republic, which holds the European Union presidency, said Saturday that the Israeli ground offensive in Gaza is a defensive action.

"At the moment, from the perspective of the last days, we understand this step as a defensive, not offensive, action," Czech EU presidency spokesperson Jiri Potuznik said.

Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg was scheduled to lead an EU delegation to the region Sunday, and Potuznik said the presidency will wait to see the results of that visit.

Israel sent troops into Gaza on Saturday evening, eight days after launching air strikes on the coastal strip, which came in the wake of a breakdown in a six-month truce with Gaza's Hamas rulers.

Dozens of rockets have been fired at Israel's southern communities over the past two weeks, killing four Israelis. The air strikes in Gaza have killed at least 420 Gazans, according to Palestinian reports.

U.S. President George W. Bush last Friday branded the Hamas rocket attacks on Israel an act of terror and outlined his own condition for a ceasefire in Gaza, saying no peace deal would be acceptable without monitoring to halt the flow of smuggled weapons to terrorist groups.

Rockets being fired from Gaza. **[Isranet photo]**

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Wounded Palestinians get medical care in Israel

By FADI EYADAT
and DANA VILER-POLLAK
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Twelve Palestinians have been evacuated to Israel for medical treatment since Israel's Gaza operation began, as hospitals in Gaza strain to accommodate the hundreds of wounded.

For one Gaza boy, being treated in an Israeli hospital should increase his chances of making a full recovery.

About a two weeks ago, before the operation began, Sari Alsamana, 9, from Beit Hanoun was playing with his cousin outside his house in the northern Gaza town when a Qassam rocket fired by Gaza militants landed nearby, followed minutes later by an additional rocket strike in the same spot.

Both boys were seriously wounded and taken to Shifa Hospital in Gaza. As "Operation Cast Lead" was launched and the Israeli Air Force started bombing the strip, Sari was taken out of the hospital's intensive care unit as the facility began to overload with Gazans wounded in the air strikes.

Sari's condition began to worsen after he was taken out of the hospital, and the family treated him at home, hoping for his condition to improve. Later, they received a call from a clinic in their neighbourhood saying it may be possible for them to pass through the Erez Crossing in order to receive medical care in Israel.

"Now I know he is in good hands, that they will take care of him with devotion," Sari's father Mana said last Wednesday from the Tel Hashomer Hospital in Tel Aviv, where he is staying with his son until he recovers from his injuries.

"The atmosphere is different. It's America here. In Gaza there is nothing but fear, cold, hunger, and war," Mana added.

Sari's cousin was released from Shifa Hospital last week, despite being in critical condition.

"They have no room in the hospital. They released him, and he is likely to die," Mana said.

Last Wednesday, two additional Palestinian children were taken to Israel for treatment, including a seven-year-old with Down syndrome who suffered a head injury from an air force bomb dropped next to his house in Gaza. The boy's father was killed by the bomb, and his mother was wounded.

The boy is currently being treated at the Schneider Children's Hospital in Petach Tikvah, where he arrived in critical condition with serious injuries to his spinal cord and neck. His condition will be assessed again in the coming days.

A Palestinian medic, left, hands over a sick Palestinian boy at the Erez Crossing to a MADA medic for treatment in Israel. *[Isranet photo]*

Australians rally against Israel

JTA

SYDNEY, Australia — Thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators rallied in Australia against Israel's ground offensive in Gaza.

In Melbourne, about 2,000 anti-Israel protesters ground the city to a standstill Sunday as they marched from the State Library to Federation Square waving placards bearing slogans such as "Stop the Holocaust in Gaza" and "End the siege."

In Sydney, several streets in the central business district were blocked off as about 3,000 pro-Palestinian protesters marched to Town Hall carrying coffins draped in the Palestinian flag.

Speakers at both rallies blasted Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's Labor government for failing to condemn Israel's military invasion of Gaza. Also Sunday, about 150 pro-Israel supporters gathered on the steps of Parliament House in Melbourne, chanting "no more terror" and "free Gaza of Hamas." Among the speakers at the rally was Michael Danby, a Jewish member of Parliament in the Labor government.

Meanwhile in New Zealand, a weekly columnist for the New Zealand Herald accused Israel of ordering its soldiers to "slaughter and mutilate hundreds of citizens trapped on the Gaza Strip."

Matt McCarten in Sunday's edition wrote, "The Nazis used a similar policy during World War II in their occupied territories. The Israelis are getting the same results the Nazis got – their victims increase their hatred and determination to seek revenge."

Police made eight arrests during a demonstration by thousands against Israel in Berlin. Berlin's Jewish community also filed charges of incitement to hate based on posters displayed at a separate protest on Dec. 29.

An estimated 7,000 people turned out for Saturday's march, one of several held in European cities over the weekend protesting Israel's military operation in the Gaza Strip. In Berlin, some marchers demanded the right of return for Palestinians, referred to citizens in Gaza as prisoners, and charged Israel with blocking delivery of food and medicine.

Some clearly anti-Semitic posters were displayed, said Levi Salomon, who co-ordinates the task force against anti-Semitism for Berlin's Jewish community. Salomon told JTA he saw a family with small children holding a sign that read "Israelis are child murderers." Police arrested the adults at his urging, Salomon said, adding that what made the statement illegal was its condemnation of Israelis as a people.

Police spokesperson Michael Mass told JTA that while the demonstration was "for the most part peaceful," arrests were made on charges that included incitement to hate, breach of peace and violating the right to assembly, Mass said

Calling a demonstration peaceful gives the press and public "a false idea," Salomon said, and added that even some legal slogans "can be described as anti-Semitic." For example, Salomon said, he saw and heard slogans at recent demonstrations including "intifadah to the bitter end," "Israel mass murderer," "Zionists are fascists" and "Olmert is a murderer."

Salomon said he filed a suit in Berlin on Jan. 2 in connection with a demonstration four days earlier during which protesters were reported to be carrying signs reading "death to Israel" and "Juden Raus," or "kick out the Jews."

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite our readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes. Stories should not exceed 2,000 words.

We must receive your submissions no later than Friday, March 12. E-mail submissions are preferred, but works can also be sent by mail or brought to our office. E-mail: **info@cjnews.com.** Mail: 1500 Don Mills Rd., Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4. Submissions will *not* be returned. Only writers whose work is chosen for publication will be contacted.

CJN Purim Art Contest

It's time again for our annual **Purim Art Contest**.

Who can enter: Children in grades 1 to 6 inclusive are eligible. The children of *CJN* employees are not eligible.

Prizes: The judges will choose one drawing from two different students in each grade. These "winning" drawings will be published in *The CJN*'s 2009 Purim Poster. In addition, each of the 12 children whose drawings have been selected will receive a cheque for $25.

How to enter: You may submit as many drawings as you want. However, they should not be too small nor too large. Please paint or draw bright, bold, colourful pictures. You may use markers, crayons, paint or pencils. Please send us your name, address, phone number, age and grade along with your drawings.

You may mail or deliver your drawings to: CJN Community Contests, The Canadian Jewish News, 1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4. If you want us to return the pictures to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, we will be unable to do so.

The contest closes at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2009. We will undoubtedly receive many wonderful submissions from children all across the country. But only 12 of the drawings will be chosen as the "winners." The judges will base their decisions on a number of factors such as: the use of colour, the imaginative quality of the drawing and the way it tells an aspect of the story of Purim. The judges' decisions will be final. The chances of winning depend upon the number and quality of submissions received.

How the winner will be announced: The children whose pictures are chosen will be notified by telephone before the start of Shabbat on Friday, February 20, 2009.

When the prizes will be awarded: The "winning" pictures will be published in *The CJN* of March 5, 2009. Have fun and good luck.

Any litigation respecting the conduct and awarding of a prize in this contest may be submitted to the Régie des Loteries et courses du Québec.

Italian aid

Italy's Jewish community will send more than $400,000 (US) in medical supplies to aid children in both Israel and Gaza. The Rome Jewish Community and the umbrella Union of Italian Jewish Communities said their "gesture of humanity" will see half of the donation go to children and other civilians in Gaza "caught up in the targeted attacks on the Hamas terrorist infrastructure. The remaining half will go to children and civilians in southern Israel hit by Hamas rockets."

Holtzberg son dies

The son of a Chabad couple killed last month in Mumbai has died. Dov Holtzberg, the four-year-old son of Chabad emissaries Gavriel and Rivka Holtzberg, died of Tay-Sachs disease and was buried next to his parents and older brother. His brother died of the same illness two years ago. Dov had been living in a long-term care facility in Jerusalem.

IDF on YouTube

The Israeli army has opened a YouTube channel that displays footage of Gaza bombing raids. The Israel Defence Forces' International Press branch created the channel as part of its effort to win the war in the media.

The channel includes footage of pinpoint bombing operations in Gaza and other video clips of army operations, including aid distribution.

Tehran demonstration

Members of Iran's small Jewish community staged a demonstration outside of the UN office in Tehran, to protest the IDF's operations in the Gaza Strip.

The official Iranian news agency, IRNA, reported that community members, alongside Jewish parliamentarian Siamak Mara-Sedq, urged Israel to do its part to return quiet and security to the region. The chair of Iran's Jewish Union, Rahmatullah Raafi, said the community had come in support of the Palestinian people.

Israeli sources suspect the demonstration was organized by the government in Tehran and does not represent that actual stance of Iranian Jews. Some 25,000 Jews live in Iran.

Students rally

While some Israeli university students staged demonstrations in protest of the IDF's military campaign in the Gaza Strip, students in areas subject to an onslaught of Hamas rockets, including Ben-Gurion University (BGU) in Be'er Sheva and Sapir College in Sderot, fled in droves. Both BGU and Sapir announced classes were suspended indefinitely as a result of the continued rocket fire.

In Haifa, 400 students held two rallies, one in favour of the operation and one against, with the groups facing one another at the Technion.

Rightist students at Haifa University held a solidarity march supporting the operation in Gaza while left-wing students planned to hold a rally of their own, during which they would use stickers calling on the army to cease killing innocent civilians.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Tel Aviv University students held a rally in support of the residents of the south and the IDF operation.

Writers weigh in

Authors Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua say Hamas is responsible for the current outbreak of violence. Oz told the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera the time has come for a complete ceasefire in exchange for Israel easing the blockade of the Gaza Strip.

Yehoshua wrote in La Stampa that "the Israeli operation was necessary, but also how quickly it needs to end.

"We need to normalize relations," he said.

Israeli troops divide Gaza

Continued from page 1

he said. "I asked myself and my ministerial colleagues if there was some other step, outlet or effort that we had not yet tried before sending our boys into a place fraught with such risks, from which some of them may not return.

"This morning I can look each one of you in the eyes and say that the government did its utmost before deciding on the operation. This operation was unavoidable."

Israeli troops in Gaza have divided the costal strip into two or three sections, according to reports, to prevent the transfer of weapons and terrorists from one sector to the other. Details of the operation have been embargoed by the military. Most reports are coming from Palestinian sources.

In the first night of the ground invasion, Israeli soldiers exchanged gunfire with Hamas terrorists as Israeli Air Force planes struck more than 45 targets, including tunnels, weapons storage facilities, and rocket- and shell-launching squads and platforms, according to a statement from the Israel Defence Forces spokesperson's office. The Israeli navy also targeted Hamas strongholds, including its intelligence headquarters in Gaza City.

During the cabinet meeting, military leaders took stock of Hamas' situation.

"Hundreds of terrorists have been killed, while weapons and ammunition stocks have been destroyed, along with tunnels and rocket manufacturing facilities," Military intelligence Chief Maj.-Gen. Amos Yadlin told the cabinet.

Yadlin said that the Hamas government is no longer functioning.

Some senior Hamas leaders are considering a move toward a ceasefire, Shin Bet security chief Yuval Diskin told government leaders.

Despite the ground attack, rockets and mortar shells continue to rain down on southern Israel – 36 hit the area Sunday morning and early afternoon. Several buildings were damaged and people lightly injured in the attacks. One rocket scored a direct hit on a home in Sderot Sunday, injuring one woman.

Some 400 rockets have struck Israel since the Gaza operation began.

The Israeli army says the ground operation is aimed at destroying Hamas' terrorist infrastructure and taking control of the areas from which rockets are being fired into Israel. A statement from the IDF spokesperson's office says the army has raised the level of alert for military forces in other areas of the country.

Olmert, Defence Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni approved the ground incursion during a meeting Friday night.

"The decision to embark on the ground phase of the operation was taken following in-depth consideration," Barak said during an address to the nation and the media shortly after Israeli troops entered Gaza.

"We have carefully weighed all our options. We are not war hungry, but we shall not – I repeat, we shall not – allow a situation in which our towns, villages and civilians are constantly targeted by Hamas. It will not be easy or short, but we are determined."

Barak said Israel seeks peace.

"We have restrained ourselves for a long time, but now is the time to do what needs to be done," he said. "We are determined to afford our citizens what any citizen anywhere in the world is entitled to – peace, tranquillity and freedom from threats."

The IDF began calling up thousands of reservists on Saturday. The majority are from combat units, a large number are from the Homefront Command and some are from other supporting units, according to the IDF spokesperson's office.

On Saturday, the air force dropped leaflets in areas of Gaza urging residents to leave their homes, since the army would be operating in the area. Gaza residents complained in telephone interviews broadcast on CNN that the warnings were meaningless because they had nowhere else to go.

"Because of the terrorist actions carried out by some terrorist figures out of the area of residence against the State of Israel, the IDF was forced to immediately respond and act inside your area of residence," the leaflets read. "For your own safety, you are required to leave the area immediately."

The government has made it clear in several statements that it is not at war with the Palestinian civilians of Gaza, nor does it intend to retake the Gaza Strip.

"The IDF spokesperson wishes to reiterate that the residents of Gaza are not the target of the operation," read a statement issued Saturday shortly after the ground operation began. "Those who use civilians, the elderly, women and children as 'human shields' are responsible for any and all injury to the civilian population. Anyone who hides a terrorist or weapons in his house is considered a terrorist."

Israeli spokespeople have taken to the airwaves, from CNN to Al-Jazeera, to reiterate the message that it is working to reduce civilian casualties. Most Hamas infrastructure, however, is buried deep within civilian neighbourhoods, and Hamas has called on Palestinians to volunteer to serve as human shields, according to reports.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, in a phone call with Olmert shortly after the ground invasion began, called on Israel to pull out of Gaza and to cease all violence. The UN Security Council met for four hours on Saturday night and adjourned without producing a statement. The United States blocked a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire and expressing concern about the escalation of violence in the area.

In Tel Aviv, hundreds of demonstrators took to the streets Saturday night both for and against the Gaza operation. In the Israeli Arab town of Sankhin, some 10,000 demonstrators protested the operation – one of the largest rallies held by Israeli Arabs in many years, according to reports. Several Arab Knesset members, as well as mayors of Arab towns and Arab community leaders, joined the protest.

Clarification

After the story "Madoff scandal reaches into Canada" appeared in our Jan. 1 edition, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto provided some additional information to The CJN. The federation clarified that one investment manager was responsible for $5.4 million of Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto assets. Of that $5.4 million, $486,000 was invested in a Madoff fund, resulting in a loss of $486,000. The remaining $5 million is not at direct risk from the Madoff scandal.

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Did you know pregnancy had a humorous side?

By DAVID SILVERBERG
Special to The CJN

Pregnancy can be a laughing matter, says playwright and actor Diane Flacks, who is exposing the lighter side of entering motherhood in her one-woman show, Bear With Me.

The title of the show is apt: mood swings and confusion afflict the newly pregnant woman, Flacks tells Canadian Jewish News on a break from rehearsals.

"The hormones make you crazy," she says. "I once loaded a dishwasher full of cream of wheat, instead of powder. I began to question who I was when I was pregnant."

The 42-year-old Cabbagetown resident, who is the mother of Eli, 6, and Jonathan, 2, began writing a book about pregnancy's dramatic effects several years ago and published the book in 2005 with McClelland & Stewart. The book sparked a live, solo performance that toured Toronto, Ottawa and London, Ont. Evidently, Flacks wasn't the only woman who was looking to laugh as she watched her belly swell.

"Women need to talk about the impact of pregnancy on their lives," she says.

She discovered that other women also managed to find humour when they felt the worst. In fact, one of the oldest expectant women she knew had a smile on her face during pregnancy.

Flacks relates the story of Sarah, Abraham's wife, who laughed when she learned she was going to bear a child. "When you are hit with something uncontrollable like this, sometimes all you can do is laugh," Flacks says.

Bear With Me will highlight some of the more poignant stories from Flacks' pregnancy. Especially relevant to a certain audience is the bit on the "Jewish mother gene," she says.

"This is a serious genetic disorder passed on from a mother to a daughter," she explains. "It turns perfectly laid-back people into anxious mothers. When I had kids, the 'Jewish mother gene' kicked in. I looked at my child and wondered where that rash came from. I was worried if he was too warm, too cold. This all comes from the Jewish school of God-forbid-something-should-happen-to-you way of thinking."

Diane Flacks

Flacks' motherhood story is also spiced with a unique detail: she is queer, and her children were conceived thanks to a male donor. "I'm certainly up front about it in the play," Flacks says.

She relishes staging Bear With Me because it challenged her as a playwright. She has also collaborated on theatre shows with Richard Greenblatt and TV shows such as Kids in the Hall.

"This is a clear way to get my point of view across to an audience," she says.

But is that message somewhat negative, considering all the problems Flacks faced during her pregnancy?

Not at all, she counters. "Once I stopped puking, it really was quite magnificent."

Bear With Me (Nightwood Theatre) runs Jan. 7 to 24 at Berkeley Street Theatre, 26 Berkeley St. For tickets, call 416-368-3110.

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Israeli Big Brother sparks cultural controversy

By DINA KRAFT
JTA

TEL AVIV — From Internet chat rooms to household dinner tables, the Israeli version of the reality TV show Big Brother has been given a lot of attention.

With its mansion in the hills of Jerusalem stacked with Israelis representing every token stereotype in the country, the show sparked a 21st-century cultural showdown between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews.

The show features contestants who live in seclusion together in a house wired with television cameras that never turn off. Each week, one of them is voted off.

The program, which enjoyed the highest ratings of any TV program in Israel over the last decade, culminated in mid-December with a final episode that had thousands of viewers send text messages with their votes for the winner.

At the focus of the frenzy were a foul-mouthed, middle-aged building contractor named Yossi Boublil and his sidekick and daughter, Einav. Of Moroccan background, they were the two Sephardi stars of the show. The father, who finished second in the contest, has come to symbolize the anti-hero, stereotypical Sephardi: an aggressive, macho man of the people. Even his own revelation that he once tried to aggressively lure a girlfriend into group sex did nothing to dampen his popularity.

There has been much hand-wringing in Israel over the "Boublilification" of Israeli society. Critics complained the show was dragging the nation's culture into the sewer and distracting the country from real issues of importance.

One sombre poster on Tel Aviv notice boards admonished Israelis to think a little more about Gilad Shalit, the captive Israeli soldier thought to be in the Gaza Strip, and a little less about Boublil. "That's the real reality," the poster said.

Israeli television, which until 1993 consisted of just one state-run channel, once focused on more serious-minded programming, heavy on social documentary programs and BBC dramas. Now, with cable and two other regular broadcast channels, Israel increasingly has the same kind of entertainment clutter that can be found elsewhere around the world.

The debate over Big Brother highlighted the conflict between the old Israeli cultural guard and the new.

Longtime Israeli broadcaster Haim Yavin, considered the Walter Cronkite of Israeli news, was appalled that his documentary series on Israeli Arabs was not promoted on Channel Two, the same station that aired Big Brother.

The success of the show has been attributed to producers' ability to cleverly handpick contestants who represented a microcosm of Israel.

Among them was Boublil's main rival, Shifra Cornfeld, the artsy daughter of a rabbi who abandoned her haredi upbringing to become secular. To many, Cornfeld – who emerged as the victor on the show and won its $250,000 prize – represented the stereotype of the Ashkenazi elite, living in Tel Aviv in a bubble of left-wing politics and liberalism, detached from the rest of Israel.

Other contestants included a religiously observant man, a gay man who came from a Russian immigrant background and an attractive Arab-Israeli aspiring actress.

Continued on page 33

Arts & Travel

Jewish author inspired by family

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

Ricki Segal's first book, My Zayde and Other Memories of Growing Up Jewish, grew out of a short story that she began writing in 1995.

She wrote The Doll (page 96 in the 102-page book) as a tribute to her grandmother, Gertie Lazar, who was already suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

The short story is a semi-fictionalized account of her baba's life as told in short vignettes.

Segal was inspired to write the story after someone she knew compared visiting an individual afflicted by Alzheimer's disease to visiting a cabbage in a supermarket.

Ricki Segal

"People who have Alzheimer's still have souls," she says, noting that many of her older family members, including her mother, Hilda Stern, have or have had the disease.

She said that $2 from every copy sold of My Zayde and Other Memories will be donated to the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

The first-born child of Sid and Hilda Stern, Segal grew up in Winnipeg's largely Jewish north end and attended Peretz School and local high schools. Her first career was as an X-ray technician.

After marrying in 1967, she and her husband moved to Regina. During her 28 years there she raised three children and participated in the Jewish community.

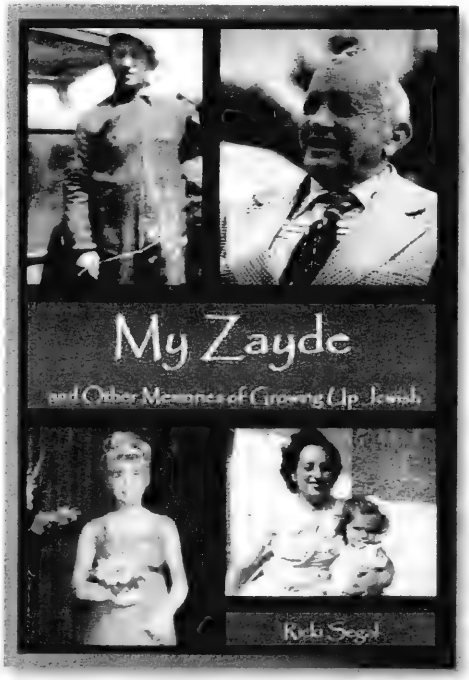
"There were quite a number of young Jewish families in Regina at that time with children the same age as ours," she said. "I was on the synagogue board and served as social chair for many years. I was also a member of Hadassah."

After her children started school, Segal worked in sales for a time and later at the Regina Public Library.

She and her first husband separated in 1995, and she moved to Toronto, where one of her sons was living. Although she has been writing poetry and short stories all her life, she became involved in journalism professionally only after relocating to Toronto.

"I was a freelance writer and did a lot of work for a public relations firm," she said. She also did some freelance work for the Jewish Post and News and The CJN.

She moved back to Regina in 2001 where she met and married her current husband, Harold Segal. The couple moved to Winnipeg last June to be nearer to her mother, who is a resident of the Simkin Centre, a personal care home.



"I finished the book on June 26, and we left for Winnipeg on June 27," she said.

My Zayde and Other Memories is a compilation of Segal's poems and short stories about different family members and events in her life growing up in Winnipeg. There are also several pages of pictures of the extended Stern, Lazar, Daiter and Schnoor family members.

"I felt that I had to write this book and these stories because I am the oldest of the Lazar grandchildren. I felt that I had to tell the tales."

Segal launched her book at the end of October at McNally Robinson Booksellers in Winnipeg. She also gave a reading at the Simkin Centre.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

PLAY EXAMINES INTIMATE MOMENTS OF ORTHODOX COUPLE'S ARRANGED WEDDING

After its successful première in 2008, **Julie Tepperman** has expanded her play, Yichud/Seclusion, that examines intimate moments surrounding the arranged wedding of a young Orthodox couple, Rachel Blitzer and Chaim Berman, and its effect on their families.

Described as a one-act play in three parts, Yichud/Seclusion is presented by Convergence Theatre, whose two artistic directors, Tepperman and **Aaron Willis**, play the young newlyweds: they are actually married in real life. The cast also includes **Daniel Karasik**, **Linda Kash**, **Adam Lazarus**, **Neil Naft**, **Michael Rubenfeld** and a klezmer band. As at a real Orthodox wedding, men and women in the audience are seated separately.

Presented in conjunction with the Fringe of Toronto and the Next Stage Theatre Festival, the play runs Jan. 7 to 18 at Factory Studio Theatre, 125 Bathurst St. at Adelaide. $15, $12. 416-966-1062, www.fringetoronto.com

Also part of the Next Stage Festival is Don't Look, an "incest comedy-drama" written and performed by **Daniel Sadavoy** and **Rebecca Applebaum**, directed by **Maya Rabinovitch**. Utilizing parallel narratives twisted together like a double helix, the play follows a pair of star-crossed cousins whose innocent "makeout session" at a shivah leads to shame, regret and "unnerving hilarity." Presented by the Steady State Theatre Project at the Factory Studio Theatre, 125 Bathurst St. Jan. 7 to 18. $15, $12.

* * *

New & Noteworthy: McMaster University professor **Alan Mendelson** has written Exiles from Nowhere: The Jews and the Canadian Elite, an exploration of a strain of genteel yet persistent anti-Semitism that has flourished in the hardy soil of the true North strong and free.

Mendelson traces an intellectual heritage from **Goldwin Smith**, the notoriously prejudiced 19th-century "sage of the Grange," through a host of intellectuals and political figures, including **Henri Bourassa**, **Mackenzie King** and **Vincent Massey**. The path leads to Massey's nephew, **George Grant**, the "Christian triumphalist" philosopher whose 1965 book Lament for A Nation, assured his prominence as a public intellectual. Grant, like Goldwin Smith, professed that Jews were a discredited people condemned to eternal exile and could not be loyal citizens of Canada or any nation.

The book is an important and thoughtful addition to our understanding of homegrown anti-Semitism that, far from being marginal, was tolerated at the very centre of our intellectual and political life. It was published by Robin Brass Studio.

Deb Filler

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Toronto artist-professor **Judy Singer**, who has taught painting, drawing and art history at York University since 1976, offers an illustrated lecture on "How to Look at Paintings: The Visual Language of Art," in which she explains the visual skills needed to perceive paintings. To book her, call 416-638-9014 or e-mail judy@gotfryd.com. www. judysinger.ca

• Comedian **Deb Filler** stars in Well, I'll Tell Ya, a one-woman show at the Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Jan. 29, Jan. 31 and Feb. 1. Tickets are $25. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org or www.fillerup.ca

• The Royal Ontario Museum's Winter Weekends allows one child to be admitted free with a paid adult, senior or student on weekends until Feb. 8. The regular ROMkids weekend programming includes dinosaur digs and other hands-on fun. Visitors may also explore the new Teck Suite of Galleries: Earth's Treasures, featuring amazing gems and minerals and the largest lunar meteorite ever to go on public display.

• **Prof. Adam Fuerstenberg** speaks on "Leonard Cohen, Troubadour of Love and Pain: His Life as Reflected in Poetry and Song." Active Seniors Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. Thursday, Jan. 15, 1:30 p.m. Phyllis, 416-924 6211, ext. 155. phyllisf@mnjcc.org

• Mooredale Concerts' Music & Truffles children's series presents Toronto's **Tokai String Quartet** and actor-director **Alon Nashman** performing The Snow Queen, the **Hans Christian Andersen** fable adapted by **Patrick Cardy**. $10. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Bldg., 80 Queen's Park Cres. Sunday, Jan. 11, 1 p.m. 416-922-3714, ext. 103. www.mooredaleconcerts.com

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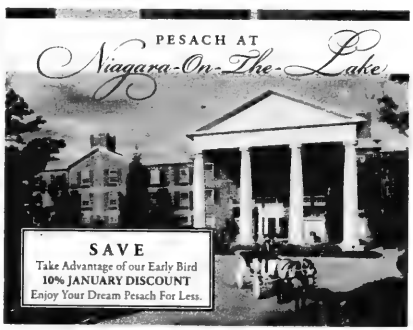

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Video buff urges us to preserve our memories

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

Sam Hoffer, a retired management consultant in Thornhill, strongly suggests that we take time to record our remembrances – of our own lives, of the lives of those we love, or of the history of an organization that we hold dear.

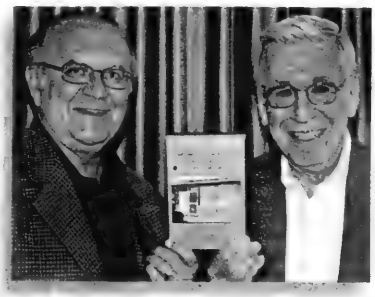
"Many of us regret that we did not listen and did not document the thoughts and events in the lives of those who have now passed on, and we can no longer share the precious stories that they carried with them because we did not capture them on paper, on a voice recording or on film," Hoffer says.

Hoffer was born in Czernowitz, Romania, after World War II. His parents and two brothers were Holocaust survivors. The family came to Canada in 1951 when Hoffer was six years old, and settled on a farm in a Jewish settlement in Saskatchewan. Hoffer's father died when he was 13 and the family moved to Winnipeg, where he later studied economics at the University of Winnipeg.

He moved to Ottawa and worked for the federal government as an economist, and in 1970, he moved to Toronto, where he met and married Ronnie Rutman.

Hoffer was always interested in filming and would document events for family and friends.

His brothers, Leizer and Yossel Hoffer, were teenagers when they and their parents were incarcerated in the Transnistria concentration camp. For more than half a century, they recounted only fragments of their stories.



Sam Hoffer (left) and Harvey Golombek hold the cover of the DVD they co-produced for the Drildzer Congregation and Society.

Then Hoffer videotaped a two-hour, free-flowing conversation, in which his brothers spoke of their lives before the war, the rise of anti-Semitism, their experiences at the concentration camp, their survival and their eventual freedom. The tape was enhanced by archival photographs recorded by Sam.

"Their reflective discourse on this two-volume video titled Reflections is peppered by spontaneous dialogue from their unique perspectives," he says. "It makes a very interesting historical record for their families."

Hoffer got involved in another project when Toronto's Drildzer Congregation and Society decided to prepare a commemorative video about the life and times of the group.

Working with Harvey Golombek, a psychiatry professor at the University of Toronto and a Drildzer member, Hoffer co-produced the video, which presents a vivid portrayal of the evolution and growth of the society from the 1920s to the present.

Golombek says the Drildzer project was inspired by the organization's desire to capture and preserve the memories of those in the society who were central to its development.

"Sadly," he notes, "some of the people we featured in the video have since passed away. Many of the families were delighted with the video because we all had family and roots through the Drildzer."

At the 50th anniversary celebration of the Suburban Study branch of the National Council of Jewish Women, Toronto section, a special program was presented looking back half a century. The presentation and the group's archival slides were videotaped by Hoffer.

The members of Suburban Study were delighted to be able to obtain copies of that video.

"There are many ways to preserve memories, and I am very gratified to be able to play a part in helping this happen," Hoffer says.

He adds that people are reluctant to tell their story, but once they do it, "they want to see it over and over – they are fascinated.

"I don't care how they do it, but people should do it, because the moment passes and it's irretrievable."

He is happy to encourage people to record their memories, he says.

"Today, it's easy to capture and preserve our memories and experiences. Many people don't think they have the ability to speak. My advice is: do it, you may not get another chance."

Reality TV increasingly popular in Jewish state

Continued from page 30

Produced by the Israeli production house Keshet, the show came down to a battle between the Boublils and their three Ashkenazi rivals. Einav Boublil nicknamed Ashkenazim in general as "the Friedmans" – a new colloquial term that quickly caught on nationwide.

Omri Marcus, a developer of reality TV content for the Israeli production house Reshet, says reality TV is a venue for more honest depictions of who people really are.

"In Big Brother, the show developed a new take on the culture war – not the type we have been seeing here since the 1950s and 1960s, but a different type of clash," Marcus said.

He described the Boublil duo as the Israeli version of rednecks, and suggests Ashkenazim and Sephardim are divided more along socio-economic lines than along ethnic ones. "It's the strong versus the weak sectors of society," he said.

In the show, Boublil says whatever comes to mind, completely unfiltered.

"Here comes this Archie Bunker-like figure who is crude and homophobic, and we love him because he shocks us with his stupidity," Marcus said. "But as time passes, the joke is on us because the person becomes bigger than the program itself."

Joshua Sobol, a leading Israeli playwright, said the Big Brother phenomenon is part of the larger phenomenon of the increasing popularity of reality TV in Israel.

"It injects into the culture a habit of viewers staring mindlessly without thinking, and people get addicted to entertainment without imagination, thinking or feeling," Sobol told JTA. "It's making people into a nation of sheep."

Sobol is among a group of artists who staged a demonstration against reality television in Israel to coincide with the show's finale last month.

"When the messages are violent, shallow and coarse, the lowest common denominator is what sells," read flyers advertising the event. "We demand a different kind of culture!"

Among those who were hooked on the show is Moran Haim, a 25-year-old manicurist from Holon, a Tel Aviv suburb. She said the show's focus on Ashkenazi-Sephardi tensions reflect the real Israel.

"It's the main issue in this country, not Palestinians versus Israelis," she said. "Again and again, it comes back to the pain that comes from being from the country's periphery and the contrasting experience of someone like Shifra, who may not have been born with a silver spoon in her mouth, but represents a more educated and professional type of person."

For Haim, whose father is of Yemenite origin and whose mother comes from a Polish family, the show also felt very familiar.

"My father is a Boublil and my mother is a Friedman," she said. "I'm the balance in the middle."

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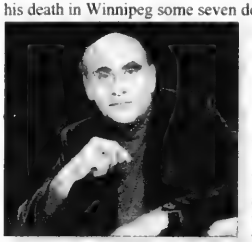
Books & Authors

Newman writes balanced bio of media tycoon Izzy Asper

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The newest biography of Israel Harold Asper, Izzy: The Passionate Life and Turbulent Times of Izzy Asper, Canada's Media Mogul (HarperCollins), takes us on a journey from his birth in small-town Manitoba in 1932 to his death in Winnipeg some seven decades later.



Peter C. Newman

It's an interesting ride, and the experienced driver at the wheel, Peter Newman, has been writing about Canadian business and politics for years now.

This usually lively book is a profile of an ambitious Jewish boy who had a career as a tax lawyer, provincial politician, merchant banker and communications tycoon.

When he died, leaving his business in the hands of his children, his $4-billion Canwest empire was a monolith, consisting of television stations that reached 94 per cent of Canada's TV-viewing public and a nationwide newspaper chain spearheaded by the Toronto-based National Post.

And lest it be forgotten, Asper was a passionate supporter of Israel, a right-wing Zionist who interpreted every anti-Israel remark or speech as a personal insult.

Newman is at his best when he concentrates on the man rather than his steady climb to affluence and influence. Most readers may be bored by the details of his acquisitions, but they will be stopped in their tracks when they read about Asper the person.

Although Newman received a research grant from the Asper Foundation to write the book, he does not engage in hagiography. Izzy is definitely not a vanity project designed to pander to his heirs. As Newman puts it, "I would have complete independence on the writing of the book as well as responsibility for its contents, which meant that the Aspers could sue me if they were so inclined."

The Aspers need not worry. Izzy is a balanced work and is felicitously written.

Asper was a contradictory figure, "a polarizing presence" worshipped by friends and followers and feared and loathed by critics and disillusioned journalists. "He was born to make trouble, and he did," Newman tartly observes.

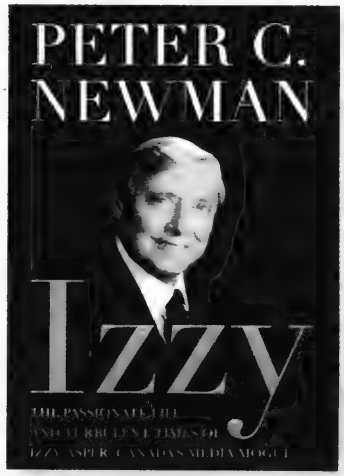
An individual who refused to distinguish between the possible and the impossible, Asper was a quintessential entrepreneur who was at once charismatic and combative.

Loyal to allies, he was toxic to enemies. "He took everything personally, even weather reports, and defended his turf with the single-mindedness of a cornered Bengal tiger," writes Newman in a typically rhetorical flourish.

Asper's relations with senior employees could be unpleasant, Newman suggests. He tried to bend editors and publishers to "his very special view of the world by issuing bureaucratic edicts, canned editorials and pink slips."

Yet, as Newman points out, Asper was a mensch in private, a philanthropist whose generosity had few equals in Canada.

Asper, whose original family name was Ausereper before it was anglicized, was born in Minnedosa. His parents, classically trained musicians from the Ukrainian town of Odessa,



arrived in Canada separately.

Although Asper was a success story par excellence, the first job he ever held, that of a sweeper in his father's movie theatre, could hardly have foretold his future.

After earning a law degree and building his practice into the largest Jewish law firm in western Canada, he began writing a nationally syndicated newspaper column on taxes, which led to his only published book, The Benson Iceberg: A Critical Analysis of the White Paper on Tax Reform.

Asper's political career, as leader of Manitoba's Liberal party, was short-lived and undistinguished. It was characterized by his espousal of the elimination of the welfare state and his self-appointed role as the champion of the West against the entrenched interests of the East.

Newman devotes chapter and verse to Asper's rise as proprietor of Canada's most formidable media empire.

In delineating his remarkable ascent, Newman lists a number of "Asper Axioms" to which he adhered as he climbed to the top of the greasy pole. Among them were: "In negotiating, never give anything without getting something in return. Whatever can happen, will happen, and plan a disaster scenario."

Newman's forays into his business smarts are revealing, but the majority of readers will probably doze off reading about them.

They may, however, perk up once they reach the part about anti-Semitism in Canada's communications industry and Asper's attempts to deal with it.

Being Jewish to his core, Asper identified intimately with Israel. The connection was solidified by a visit to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial and museum complex in Jerusalem. It was there that he became "acutely aware" of why Israeli Jews are so attached to their "postage stamp of a country."

As Newman suggests, Asper took it upon himself to become one of Israel's most ardent defenders, though many Jewish Canadians were appalled by his harsh right-wing views.

Asper, who eventually drifted away from the federal Liberal party and donated funds to the now-defunct Reform party, denounced Liberal leaders for their "weak-kneed policies" on Israel.

He was exasperated by the fact that the prime minister, Jean Chrétien, could not distinguish between Palestinian terrorist attacks and Israel's "measured" responses. Further, he claimed that Canada's department of foreign affairs was "riddled with Arabists," and that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, particularly one of its former correspondents in Israel, Neil Macdonald, was guilty of biased reporting.

In rounding off his book, Newman pays tribute to Asper's wife, Ruth Miriam (Babs), his anchor, and notes that his bad habits probably contributed to the heart attack that killed him.

He liked to drink. He chain-smoked, even while sipping soup. He was too fond of cholesterol-laden cheeseburgers. And, of course, he always seemed to be under tremendous stress.

In this respect, Newman quotes his wife: "Izzy was very impatient in the latter years… It was almost as if he had a sense of doom, that he had to get it all done, fast, fast, fast. He wasn't relaxing. He didn't take into account his physical condition in any way…"

Asper paid the ultimate price for the neglect of his health, but he left behind a rich legacy of accomplishment, as Newman relates at length.

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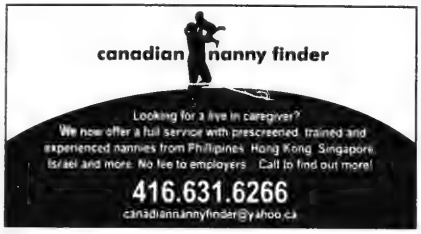
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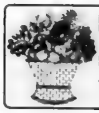

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Up again, down again Micflikier up with Amerks

By ELI SHUPAK
Special to The CJN

Jacob Micflikier was in no hurry to check out of the Rochester hotel he lived in for over a month, but wouldn't have minded finding someplace else to settle for the duration of the American Hockey League (AHL) season.

After being recalled from the Florida Everblades of the East Coast Hockey League (ECHL) on Oct. 23, Micflikier appeared in all 13 of the Americans' games, recording one goal and five assists, but was still unsure what his future holds with the club.

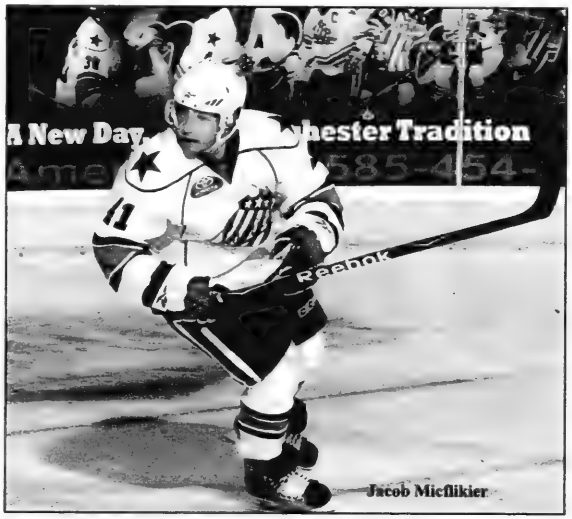
On Nov. 22 he got the bad news: he was being sent back down to Estero, Fl., between Ft. Myers and Naples, where the Everblades play. But it didn't mean the end of his AHL dreams.

In eight games with the 'Blades he registered nine goals and added 12 assists – near the top in team scoring – enough to warrant a second call up two weeks after the demotion. In 12 subsequent games with the Amerks, he scored one goal and three assists. All told, in 25 AHL games, Micflikier had two goals and eight assists on a team that is averaging only two goals a game. The Amerks, last in the North Division, play their first two games of 2009 in the MTS Centre in Winnipeg, Micflikier's hometown.

"Each game kind of feels like a tryout for me," he said in Rochester prior to being sent to Florida. "I've played well enough to solidify a spot, but at the same time, nothing is certain in this league, and on this team. I'm still trying to earn my spot every game. It's all a matter of me going out there and doing my job."

After having a solid training camp and playing in all three of Rochester's preseason games, the 5-foot-8, 180-pound left winger was reassigned to Florida prior to opening night. He was brought back up to spark the offence after the team lost its first five games, scoring seven goals in the process.

Rochester was victorious in the 24-year-old's season debut, defeating Quad City 5-4 on Oct. 24, but lost the next two nights, 6-1 and 8-3 and has been struggling ever since. The Americans sat last in the league's North Division at 9-22-0-3 through Dec. 30, having scored just 66 goals on the year.



Jacob Micflikier

Micflikier knows that he is one of the guys being counted on to contribute offensively and is eager to start putting the puck in the net, being just one step away from the National Hockey League. He signed with Rochester over the summer after missing a large part of last season with a broken leg and ruptured ligaments in his ankle.

He had a goal and four assists in eight games last year with Springfield after a call up from the Stockton Thunder of the ECHL. Prior to the season, he attended the Edmonton Oilers camp.

Micflikier was one of the rookies selected to participate in last year's ECHL All-Star game, but could not take part due to the severe injury he suffered in a practice after his skate caught a rut. He had scored 10 goals and added 23 assists in 27 games prior to the mishap.

Micflikier made his professional debut in 2006, tallying three goals and an assist in nine games with Springfield following a four-year collegiate career at the University of New Hampshire, where he graduated with a degree in political science and a business minor.

"Being from western Canada, it crossed my mind to play major junior, and I did go to Brandon's camp one year," he said. "With my size, I didn't know what kind of future hockey would bring me. The safest route was to take the college route, get my education first, and work with hockey after that.

"It's a decision I'm happy with, I never looked back or regretted it."

While Micflikier did have a bar mitzvah, he didn't attend Hebrew school, as his brother and sister did, leaving home for the ninth grade. At 14, he enrolled in the hockey program at Shattuck-St. Mary's School in Farabault, Minn. After that, he played junior hockey for a couple of years in South Dakota with the Sioux Falls Stampede of the U.S. Hockey League before going on to college.

Peer and Levy claim titles on intense final day

By NIR WOLF
Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

RA'ANANA, Israel — After two days of rain delays, Israel's top players gathered to play their semifinals and finals of the Israeli tennis championships in succession. Shahar Peer and Harel Levy emerged as the women's and men's singles champions.

The day started with Tzipi Obziler quickly disposing of Chen Astrugo 6-1, 6-2, and Levy obliterating Amir Weintraub 6-2, 6-4. Peer had more difficulty with Julia Glushko, the world's number 356, who managed to win the first set over Peer in her career. Glushko continued to fight, fending off numerous game points throughout the match before succumbing 6-3, 4-6, 6-3.

Peer, who changed her style after a disastrous year in which she dropped out of the world's top 20 players, played more defensively than usual. She never played by the net and her serve was not noticeably more effective, yet she prevailed nonetheless.

Like Peer, Dudi Sela showed signs of struggling despite holding a substantial lead over Noam Okun before finally winning 6-4, 6-4.

Peer took the first set of the women's final, which started after a 90-minute delay, with a solid 6-4 showing, but then fell apart in the second set. Obziler easily took the set 6-1, and the 600 spectators filling the stands split into Obziler and Peer supporters. Obziler broke Peer's serve early in the third set to take a 4-1 lead, but then made some critical errors that allowed the world's number 38 back into the match. Peer won 7-2 in the tiebreaker to capture her third straight title.

In the men's final, Sela tried to make a shot between his legs at set point in the opening set and lost to Levy 6-4. However, the world's number 112 regained his composure to win the second set 6-3. Sela broke Levy's serve to take a 4-3 lead, but Levy broke in return. Tied 5-5, Levy survived deuce seven times before gaining advantage on his serve and then winning the game. A few minutes later, he broke Sela again to win 7-5.

In the doubles competition Andy Ram and Noam Bar won the men's final, while Julia Glushko and Nadine Fahoun won the women's title.

Shahar Peer

Sports & Leisure

Ex NFLer finds spiritual fulfilment in Judaism

By ELI SHUPAK
Special to The CJN

The turning point in Alan Veingrad's life came in 2003, a decade after he retired as an offensive lineman with the Super Bowl champion Dallas Cowboys.

That year he reflected upon a newspaper story which talked about his life 10 years after leaving the National Football League. While raising his family, Veingrad was also spending a lot of time fishing, scuba diving and practicing martial arts.

He felt after reading the article that his life needed more meaning and purpose, so he went about making some changes.

The family started to go to shul on Shabbat and spent a lot of Friday evenings at a number of rabbis' homes. He realized that by becoming observant, he could easily incorporate the feeling from Friday night into other days of the week.

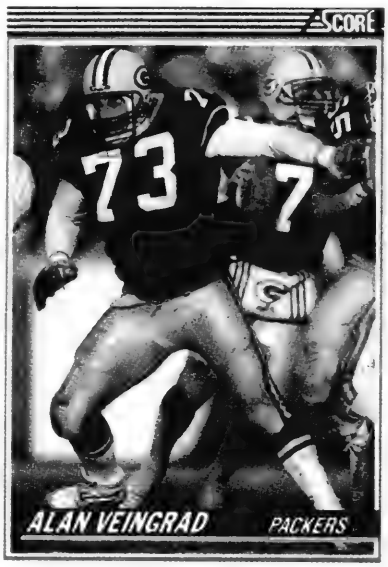
Raised in a typical Jewish household in Brooklyn, N.Y., the New Yorker's family celebrated various holidays with a focus on the meals. He said he had his first authentic Shabbat dinner a year after retirement and attended a Torah class a week later as final payment on a medical debt to a Miami radiologist cousin.

He asked the rabbi for reading material after the class and continued attending for the next six or seven years, interested in the weekly inspiration and messages found in the parshah, more than anything else.

"It inspired me to continue learning and growing as a person," he said.

"After both those experiences, I realized there was more going on in life than football, golf, and fishing," he said in a recent telephone interview. Veingrad spoke to *The CJN* while en route to Las Angeles, where he had three scheduled speaking engagements with Jewish day schools as well as Young Israel of Century City. Affiliated with the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, he has spoken in the last few years at more than 100 Chabad institutions, yeshivot, and Jewish day schools.

Veingrad, who now goes by his Hebrew name, Shlomo, began wearing a yarmulke and tzitzit for the first time in 2004 on a plane ride to Israel, and has kept them on as part of his daily attire ever since. Due to family, work, and speaking engagements, he has not been able to make a return trip.



Super Bowl winner Alan Veingrad, as he was in his playing days with the Green Bay Packers and the Dallas Cowboys, and today, above.

The 45-year-old began his speaking career while playing with the Green Bay Packers, who signed Veingrad as a free agent after he went undrafted as an All-American out of East Texas State, now known as Texas A&M.

At the time, his brother was a DARE [Drug Abuse Resistance Educator] Officer with the Metro-Dade Police Department and in the off-season asked him to come to schools and speak at their graduation. The theme was usually centred around saying "no to drugs."

After 86 games, spanning five years with the Packers and a couple in Dallas with the Cowboys, the 6-foot-5, 270-pound lineman retired from the game and felt he had a story to tell.

Residing in Fort Lauderdale, where he sells commercial real estate, Veingrad recalled speaking to a group of both Jews and non-Jews in 1994.

"I wasn't really doing much with my own personal spiritual growth at the time and it wasn't until I started to be a Shomer Shabbos, keep all the observances, that my speaking career started to take off," he said.

For the past five years, Veingrad has been in demand across North America.

"I have a number of different messages depending on the speech I'm giving," said Veingrad, who spoke three times in Toronto over a weekend in the fall, and has been to Canada on five separate occasions over the past couple of years. "The bulk of my message is always around people that are really just like I am, grew up very secular, have an interest in Judaism, however, they are maybe apprehensive or haven't really grown that aspect of their life or their relationship with G-d.

"I just want to encourage people that I lived one lifestyle and now I'm living a completely different lifestyle. Everyone should open themselves up and embrace Judaism and grow with Judaism at their own pace."

In speaking about his journey, Veingrad also likes to talk about incorporating exercise into one's life and eating right, one of the challenges he says the observant world faces.

"It's been neglected," he said. "It's a real problem. One can serve G-d better with better health and a better diet."

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Some friendships work better

Can guys and girls just be friends? Yes.

Can guys and girls who once dated just be friends? Sure, but why would you want to be?

I know that the philosophy behind every great, working relationship is that the couple are friends as well as each other's loves, and so to some, it only makes sense to keep that friendship going once the love has passed.

But like most things that seem logical on paper, reality always seems to paint a different picture.

Before I go on, I should say that if there are kids involved, by all means, it's more important than ever to stay friends – and good friends at that. But if there are no strings attaching the couple to each other, I say it's best to cut loose and run.

I've tried being friends with exes, I really have, and well, today I'm not good friends with any of them. Not to say I don't feel friendly towards them. On the contrary, I wish them the best. But I'm always well aware of the boundaries that exes should impose on each other – boundaries that make any real sort of friendship a real challenge.

Does my ex want to hear about the new hot boy in my life? Of course not, but he'll pretend to be happy for me until our next conversation, when he makes sure to get me back 10 times over by nonchalantly slipping in the name of his hot new conquest and some hot new details.

When you're in a bad relationship, you get used to the tit-for-tat. But tit-for-tat often becomes a not-so-friendly competition of upmanship when you're attempting a friendly relationship with an ex.

Chances are if you're my ex, it's because I hated the drama to begin with and I'm in no rush to revisit or remember any of it.

I don't care how mature you and your ex are. I've seen this play out to different extremes with the most respectful of couples. The only difference between them and the couples who love drama are that they each pretended not to notice and care about each other's digs.

But everyone notices and everyone does care.

Now don't get me wrong. A guy friend is the best kind of friend a girl could have. They're objective, they know how to decode guy-speak, and they're the first to tell you when you're acting like a girl.

Thankfully, I have a number of good guy friends who have helped guide me along the most trying of relationships.

But the reason these friendships work is because they are based on nothing more than a platonic affection for each other. That means when we go to the mall and I catch him checking out a hot blonde, I'll point out the even hotter blonde to his right.

It also means we'll always be honest with each other, take special pains not to hurt each other and leave the games to our ridiculous crushes. Sounds like a relationship? It is. It's a special kind of relationship called a "friendship." This type of friendship plus love is undoubtedly the best kind of relationship there is.

When a guy and a girl like each other, both have too much at stake to be true friends. When emotions are involved, people naturally put up some guards to make sure that they are not being taken advantage of.

And when true emotions are involved, it's too hard to switch things off and pretend it never really mattered.

SWEET POTATO SOUP WITH BUTTERED PECANS

- 3/4 c finely chopped onion
- 1 c finely chopped leek
- 2 lg garlic cloves, minced
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- 1 baking potato, sliced thin
- 5 c parve chicken or vegetable broth
- 3/4 c dry white wine
- 1 1/2 c water

In large pot, cook margarine, onion, leek, garlic, carrots and bay leaf until softened; add salt and pepper to taste. Add potatoes, sliced thin, broth, wine, and water. Simmer covered for 15-20 min.; discard bay leaf. Puree mixture in batches in food processor until very smooth, transferring as it's pureed to a large saucepan; add additional broth to thin soup if necessary.

Pecans

3/4 c chopped pecans
2 tbls parve margarine

In a skillet cook pecans in margarine with salt to taste over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, for 10 min., or until golden brown. Transfer them to paper towels to drain. Add to soup when serving. Can be made a couple days in advance and kept in an airtight container.

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About Life

Dear Ella,

My youngest daughter is now three, and I am the size of a house. I had three kids and gained steadily with each pregnancy. I am very unhappy with myself and, at this size, I find it difficult be the good mother that I want to be.

I decided that 2009 is the year I am going to get my life back. I need this resolution to be different from the others. I am one of those "Monday" dieters, starting a new diet every Monday. I have been reading about different programs – low carb, low fat, counting points, portion control delivery, just too many to choose from.

My husband is supportive of this change as well. He has hinted to me that I am out of control and need to get a handle on this. I have gained close to 100 pounds since my wedding day 14 years ago. Any advice you can give to help me be successful this time?

This Time for Sure

Dear This Time for Sure,

New Year's resolutions serve only as a start date to change something in your life. The actual "day" you start is much less important than the specific plan you have for success.

Making the decision to change is your first step. If you want to be successful, you need a well-formulated plan. Being a regular dieter, you know by now that "diets" don't work. They all work temporarily because you suddenly become aware of what you are eating, and the side effect is that you automatically eat less. Losing weight is a formula: "garbage in, garbage out" – the number of calories you consume versus the number of calories you expend.

Experts will tell you that the best way to lose weight is to change your lifestyle. If possible, try to find a nutritionist to work with. They are trained to teach you healthy, balanced eating and portion control. They work with your strengths and limitations. The other side of the coin is exercise. Remember you need to expend energy (calories) in order to have a weight loss. There is so much more than just the food – hence our billion-dollar diet industry.

Don't worry so much about making this a "resolution." Devise a plan that will work for you first, then start. If you really want this, 2009 will be your year to be a healthy, strong woman. Good luck and happy new year.

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN., *email: eb@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional*

Look what they did for me

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

A friend recently told me how he felt about his parents getting older.

"My perception of my parents is different now. I see them as older. I can see they've slowed down and things are different than they were before. They are a little bit less able."

He said his parents are still the central figures in his life, his sisters' lives and the children's lives, and they give everyone a solid foundation.

"I always count on my mom and dad. Anything I need, they are there. Any time I need to find some peace from life, I go there.

"When I would have a bad day at work and feel so out of it, I would hang out with my parents. A lot of times, I wouldn't say what was going on. It was enough just to be there with them.

"That has not changed."

My buddy, in his mid-40s, was very contemplative throughout this interview, recognizing the continuum of life and that people get old, but his parents' youthful attitude makes this transition time easier.

"My dad just turned 81 and my mother is 78, and they feel older. But they don't have a negative outlook on life, or give that sense of 'we're getting old and this is depressing.' Things are slowly starting to hurt though – their hearing has gone a bit, and they are more cautious about their driving. You see bits and pieces creep in – natural aging stuff, but they are very vibrant, go regularly to the gym, and are actively involved with their grandchildren's lives."

My buddy's children are young teenagers, and on some level, they are aware their bubbie and zaidy are aging, but express the feeling that they will always be around. His sisters are aware the aging process has come to visit their parents. They never really talk about it, but it's understood they will all take care of their mom and dad when the time comes.

"Look what they have done for us," he says. "I hope my kids do the same for me one day. That's the way it's supposed to be."

Time marches on, my friend tells me, and as it does, he thinks about the next phase of his existence.

"I know my parents are going to pass away, but I try not to think about it too often because I don't want to face it until I have to. I like having them here. It's so comforting. My parents symbolize home, and once they are not here, I'll feel lost."

To everyone else, he says, he is a grown-up man, but as long as he has parents, inside he feels like a kid and has a licence to act like one when he's around them.

"When I'm with them, I love to act goofy. I always have. I always will."

He concludes the interview sounding sad. "Soon it will be my time to do the tough work, to be their parents. It's difficult to see my parents as being older, because I always thought they would be around forever. They were my default when I was a kid – and even today. How nice it is to say, 'Ah, I'm going to my mom's house.'"

He looks down at nothing in particular and says, "My dad showed me the tallit he wants to be buried in. I sloughed it off. I didn't want to see it."

"The days of Yisrael drew near to die…" –the Torah

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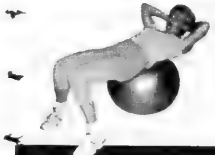

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This Week

National

Sid Ryan's apology is not enough, groups say. ***Page 3***

Veterans memorial at Earl Bales nixed. ***Page 6***

New Edmonton JCC postponed. ***Page 17***

Arts & Travel

Hannah Moscovitch play is a powerful one-act drama. ***Page 30***

Winnipeg composer's newest work is based on the Holocaust. ***Page 33***

Sports & Leisure

Weinberg brothers help Jewish team to victory. ***Page 38***

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An Israeli paratroop brigade operates in Gaza last week.
[Doron Keren/IDF/Israel Sun photo]

Morality plays role in IAF missions: pilot

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Flying over the Gaza Strip, former Israeli Air Force (IAF) pilot Lt.-Col. S. saw first hand the tactics Hamas employs when shelling Israel.

Twice he saw Hamas operatives firing into Israel from houses inside a Palestinian town. "They don't go to the woods or open places. They use houses and shoot from open windows into Israel," he said in an interview with The CJN.

S., who retired from active service after 23 years, knows most of the IAF's commanders – former and current – who make the final call on whether to drop a bomb on a terrorist target.

The decision, he said, is not taken lightly and every effort is made to keep civilian losses to a minimum.

The air force expends great energy to make sure only legitimate targets are hit, and he rejects suggestions from Israel's critics that Palestinians are being massacred in Gaza. In fact, the ratio of civilians to terrorists who are hit has been going down for years. "It's a major focus of the IAF. I think it has to do with a wider issue and that's morality," he said.

Continued on page 29

Jewish groups review security

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Hundreds of Jewish organizations in North America have been advised to reassess their security procedures in light of the situation in the Middle East.

The Secure Community Network (SCN), which co-ordinates security for North American Jewish institutions, held a conference call Jan. 6 with representatives of more than 500 Jewish organizations, including synagogues, and similar calls later in the day with representatives of Jewish community centres and the following day with local federation executives.

Doron Horowitz, community security director for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and one of the conference call speakers, along with representatives of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, outlined a "top 10 list" of security precautions, and detailed concerns that should be addressed, in order of priority.

He declined to be more specific about his recommendations in order not to compromise security, but he said "it's about being vigilant and taking preventive measures, and being aware."

The federation has a close relationship with law enforcement authorities, he added.

Horowitz – who works with Canadian Jewish Congress and UJA Federation and affiliates – noted that, while "rhetoric has increased," there are "no specific threats in terms of an inevitable or imminent attack."

However, he added, in light of the situation in the Middle East and "strong anti-Israel sentiments," the Jewish community and its institutions are in a "heightened state of alert," given recent incidents in Europe and also that emotions regarding the situation run high.

Any responses from the Jewish community should be "driven by reason and logic, not by emotion or fear," Horowitz said.

Continued on page 4

Shmot
Candlelighting: 4:50
Havdalah: 5:56
Greater Toronto Area

Jewish world rallies for Israel – please see pages 5, 22, 28

The News in Brief

Canada

Protesters Arrested

TORONTO — Eight Jewish women, including prominent activist Judy Rebick, were arrested Jan. 7 after they entered the Israeli consulate in Toronto and began protesting Israel's actions in Gaza. The women entered the heavily secured consulate in pairs. Once they were all inside, they staged a sit-in. The RCMP was called and led the women out in handcuffs. They were turned over to Toronto police, and each was charged with one count of breach of the peace. The charges were later dropped and the women were released. Israeli peace activists, artists, and several students were in the group. In a statement, they said that they were "outraged at Israel's latest assault on the Palestinian people and by the Canadian government's refusal to condemn these massacres." A spokesperson for the consulate declined comment when contacted by The CJN.

World

Djerba Trial Opens

PARIS — Two suspects accused of helping to bomb an 1,900-year-old Tunisian synagogue said they were innocent on the first day of their trial in Paris. A third suspect, Khalid Sheik Mohammed, who is also an accused planner of the 9/11 terror attacks and an adviser to Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, wasn't present at the Jan. 5 trial. He's being held at the U.S. prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The shul attack took place on the island of Djerba in April 2002. It killed 21 people and wounded 30 others.

Woman Nominated

WASHINGTON — U.S. president-elect Barack Obama has nominated a Jewish woman to serve as solicitor general. Elena Kagan, dean of Harvard Law School, would be the first female to serve in the job if confirmed by the Senate.

Recount Challenged

MINNEAPOLIS — Norm Coleman said he'll challenge Al Franken's U.S. Senate victory in court. The Minnesota senator, a Republican, said Jan. 7 that he'll contest the recount, which ended with Franken winning by 225 votes. Coleman, who served one Senate term, brushed aside calls to drop his challenge. Minnesota law prevents the certification of an election until all legal challenges are settled, which means the seat could be vacant for weeks. The race between Franken, a former Saturday Night Live performer, and Coleman was the only 2008 Senate campaign with two Jewish candidates.

Congress raps MNA over anti-Gaza rally

MONTREAL — Canadian Jewish Congress says Amir Khadir isn't fit to sit in the Quebec National Assembly unless he denounces "repeated" calls to kill Jews and other "heinous" slogans heard at a large Jan. 4 protest in downtown Montreal against Israel's Gaza invasion.

Calls of the Arabic "*al-mawt al-Yahud*" were heard, as well as the chant "*Khaybar, khaybar, ya Yahoud, jaysh Muhammad sawfa yaud*," which, the Quebec-Israel Committee says is a call for the return of the armies of Muhammad, which harks back to a seventh-century Muslim massacre of Jews at Medina.

Khadir was the most prominent speaker at the protest. A longtime pro-Palestinian activist and co-leader of Québec Solidaire, he was elected in the Dec. 7 election in the Plateau Mont-Royal riding, the first member of the left-wing sovereigntist party to sit in the legislature.

"His failure to denounce the hate messages and calls for the murder of Jews raises grave concerns about his ability to represent his constituents in Mercier in a dignified and unbiased manner," said CJC Quebec region president Victor Goldbloom.

CJC said his lack of response to its demand he dissociate himself from the "hate messages" raises "serious doubt about his commitment to the values of freedom, dignity and social justices he purports to defend."

The rally also saw the burning of an Israeli flag outside the Israeli consulate, shouts of "intifadah," the flying of the Hamas and Hezbollah flags, and accusations of Israeli "terrorism" and "massacre."

Funding Considered

NEW YORK — The Orthodox Union is considering an emergency fund to help cash-strapped day schools and yeshivas. It floated the idea of collecting money to help needy schools at a Jan. 7 meeting of educators that it convened at its Manhattan headquarters to discuss the poor economy and its effect on schools.

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Jewish groups give Ryan's apology cool reception

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

It was the non-apology apology, as far as Jewish advocacy organizations were concerned.

Efforts by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario president Sid Ryan to make amends for his comparison of Israel in Gaza to the Nazis in Europe left Canadian Jewish Congress "frustrated."

"Ryan's apology for his anti-Semitic comparison of Jews and Israelis to Nazis would be far more welcome if he weren't persisting in his outrageous call for an academic boycott of Israelis," said Rabbi Reuven Bulka, co-president of Congress. "As a result, he continues to bring shame to CUPE Ontario."

More Gaza-related coverage
Pages 4,5, 9, 11, 16,18,22,27-29

B'nai Brith Canada dismissed the union leader's apology as a "public relations ploy.

"Sid Ryan's apology would only be meaningful if he chose to remove from consideration the proposed resolution to boycott Israeli academics," said Frank Dimant, B'nai Brith Canada's executive vice-president. "He fails to recognize the inherent contradiction of apologizing for his offensive remarks on the one hand, but refusing to accept on the other hand that the very same bias against Israel and its Jewish citizens is at the core of the proposed boycott resolution."

Ryan, an outspoken critic of Israel, lashed out at the Jewish state last week when he proposed "a ban on Israeli academics doing speaking, teaching or research work at Ontario universities as a protest against the Dec. 29, 2008 bombing of the Islamic University in Gaza… We are ready to say Israeli academics should not be on our campuses unless they explicitly condemn the university bombing and the assault in Gaza in general."

The resolution was originally proposed by CUPE Ontario's university workers committee.

Ryan later made the connection to the Nazis that infuriated Jews: "Attacking an institution of learning is just beyond the pale. They deliberately targeted an institution of learning. That's what the Nazis did."

Ryan's apology was published on CUPE National's website. It stated: "I was wrong to say what I did. It was never my intention to hurt or cause offense to anyone. I was attempting to draw attention to the terrible bombing of learning institutions. I got caught up in the emotion, and the comparison I used was hurtful and completely beyond the pale."

The bombing referred to by Ryan took place as Israeli ground troops entered Gaza to halt Hamas rocket attacks on Israel. Israeli sources say their soldiers came under fire from the university and they responded with mortar rounds. Palestinians say many civilians were killed. Israel Defence Forces spokespeople suggested secondary explosions caused by stored munitions and booby traps likely contributed to the death toll.

Sid Ryan

Ryan did not return calls from The CJN and a CUPE National spokesperson directed all inquiries to the union's Ontario wing. While CUPE National did not take a position on the proposed boycott, its national president, Paul Moist, wrote to Prime Minster Stephen Harper last week criticizing his government's position on the conflict.

"On behalf of the 570,000 members of CUPE, I am writing to demand that the Canadian government condemn the military assault on the people of Gaza that the State of Israel commenced on Dec. 26. CUPE condemns all acts of violence in the Middle East, including the Hamas rockets being launched into Israel and the Israeli offensive mentioned above. To date, your government has stated publicly your support for the Israeli people to protect themselves from attack. This is a woefully inadequate and frankly shameful response on behalf of Canadians."

The letter went on to demand that "the Canadian government, as a member nation of the UN, condemn the serious violations of humanitarian and international law by the State of Israel" and push for an immediate ceasefire.

Congress CEO Bernie Farber called Ryan's singling out of Jewish Israeli academics discriminatory against Jews. "Is he referring to Israeli Christians, Israeli Arabs or Druze?" Farber asked. "When Hamas was lobbing rockets into Israel, where was the call from Sid Ryan that academics from Gaza be boycotted."

"The proposed CUPE Ontario boycott based solely on Israeli citizenship is a clear violation of this principle [against discrimination] and flies in the face of free academic debate and tolerance for differing cultures and opinion," said Avi Benlolo, president of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center.

Meanwhile, the University of Western Ontario announced it would not participate in a boycott of Israeli academics. Western president Paul Davenport told the London Free Press, "I'm very dismayed at the suggestion by CUPE that universities should boycott faculty from Israel. We believe in academic freedom… It is simply unwise to try to eliminate interactions among academics."

Following the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war, the British University and College Union called for an academic boycott of Israeli institutions of higher learning. Although the proposal was eventually withdrawn after the union received legal advice against it, Canadian universities rejected the proposal.

"We specifically object to the scapegoating of any country's academics by those whose quarrel is with the policies of that country's government," University of Toronto president David Naylor stated at the time. Ryerson and York universities and the University of Toronto were also among many Canadian schools that rejected a boycott.

Ottawa commits $4M to aid Palestinians

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Ottawa is sending $4 million in humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza.

In a joint announcement last week on the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) website, Bev Oda and Lawrence Cannon – ministers of international cooperation and foreign affairs, respectively – announced that Canada would send the money to help stem the "deteriorating humanitarian situation" in Gaza.

"Canada remains deeply concerned by the conflict and is committed to helping the innocent civilians affected by the violence in Gaza," Oda said.

CIDA will administer the aid package – $3 million of which is designated to support a UN appeal to "meet urgent needs" such as food, shelter and medical materials.

Continued on page 18

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Greater Toronto Area

Associated sends out letter to parents

Continued from page 1

David Brown, president of Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto, the country's largest Jewish day school, sought to reassure parents in a letter sent out last week.

"As a result of recent events in Israel, security has become an even greater priority for Associated's leadership. To that end, we are in close contact with and following the recommendations being made by security specialists at UJA Federation and Canadian Jewish Congress who are continuously monitoring and assessing the communal security situation," he said.

He did not list new security measures in detail, except to note that "uniformed security personnel will be on duty" at Associated's three campuses.

One of those guards supervised drop-off procedures last Friday at the school's southern elementary campus.

Also last week, B'nai Brith Canada issued a country-wide security alert that called for heightened vigilance at Jewish institutions.

In a Jan. 8 news release, B'nai Brith said that there had been "a spike in incidents against Jews in Canada, including harassment and death threats. This comes amidst reports of violence abroad, notably the firebombing of a synagogue in Paris, and credible reports emerging that point to possible other global targets."

The document advised that Jewish institutions "ensure that proper security measures are in place at all times" and urged people to report suspicious activity to its anti-hate hotline.

Paul Goldenberg, U.S. national director of SCN, said organizations were advised to reassess their security with a particular emphasis on counter-surveillance measures.

"At this point in time, there is nothing imminent or specific" as far as threats against American Jewish institutions, said Goldenberg. But he said organizations were also advised to test their security systems and procedures by running simulations to ensure everyone fully understands them.

In Montreal, Rabbi Reuben Poupko, chair of the security co-ordinating committee for the Montreal Jewish community, said there is no need for alarm.

"We are in touch on a daily basis with all levels of the police, and CSIS, who have been extraordinarily co-operative and helpful, and there is no intelligence that there is a specific threat in Canada or Montreal," he said.

"All we are asking is that Jewish institutions review their existing security procedures and make sure everyone is up-to-date in how to use them."

Montreal police have increased patrols around Jewish sites, he added.

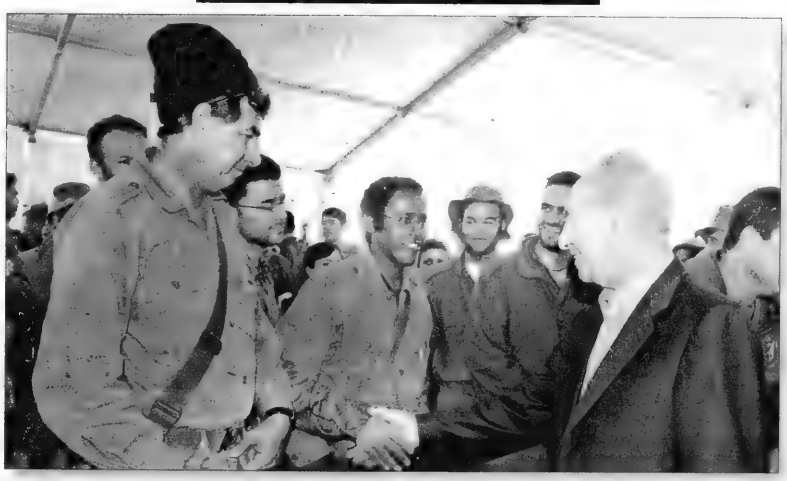
With files from JTA, Janice Arnold and Daniel Wolgelerenter.

Students at Leo Baeck Day School created posters in support of Israel, and raised more than $1,000 to benefit the Israel Connections Take a Break program, which provides tour buses for people under attack by Hamas rockets, to enable them to take a sightseeing tour. Pictured are, clockwise from top right, Jordan Moness, Sam Dreyzin, Jaydan Motlis, Jonelle Grossman and Jordan Garbe.

From the editor's desk...

Will Return

SeeJN



PERES BUILDS MORALE: Israeli President Shimon Peres meets with reserve soldiers in Tzeelim training base before they enter the Gaza Strip. ***International coverage begins on page 27.***

[Mark Neyman/GPO/Flash90 photo]

Jewish communities rally to support Israel

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Canadian Jews gathered last Thursday night at synagogues and community centres across the country to show their solidarity with Israel.

Rallies were held in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, London, Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax. Rally-goers in Toronto saw a live satellite broadcast from Be'er Sheva in southern Israel, which was also shown via webcast at the other Canadian events.

In Toronto alone, an estimated 5,000-plus people filled the sanctuary and overflow seating at Beth Tzedec Congregation, where keynote speaker Alon Pinkas, a political commentator and former Israeli consul general in New York, stressed that Hamas is "not just a terrorist organization" or splinter group.

"This is the government of Gaza lobbing missiles, rockets and mortar shells every day on southern Israel."

Rally-goers at Beth Tzedec Congregation waved Israeli and Canadian flags to show their support for Israel [*Frances Kraft photo*]

Pinkas said Israel's "Cast Lead" operation in Gaza, which began late last month, should have been called "Push Came to Shove."

Israel's "sole military objective was to inflict on Hamas a punishing and overwhelming military strike, hopefully with the goal to significantly reduce their ability… and their willingness to launch rockets into Israel," Pinkas said.

Hamas is "the tip of a broader or wider conflict" with Iran, he added, emphasizing that "Hamas is an outpost of Iran. Have no doubt about it."

Israel's political objective, said Pinkas, is "to create a durable, sustainable, but more importantly, enforceable mechanism that would render Hamas' ability to even hold missiles impossible." It would require international assistance, he noted.

He added that it would be counterproductive for Israel to re-occupy the Gaza Strip.

Addressing media accusations of a disproportionate response by Israel, Pinkas suggested that military response should be proportionate "to the pain of the threat you're facing" rather than to pain inflicted.

"More Germans were killed in World War II than British. That didn't make the Germans right," he said.

"If it was all about quid pro quo, Israel would indiscriminately launch 3,000 missiles into Gaza, or would blow up buses or pizza parlours in Gaza."

Indicting Hamas for "stashing missiles and explosives in schools, hospitals, apartments and mosques," Pinkas said that "no children should be put on a balcony against people shooting at them.

"At the end of all this, there's going to have to be a political process," he said. "We're going to have to find a way to coexist."

Israel's consul general in Toronto, Amir Gissin, said Israel is fighting two wars: one on the ground in Gaza, and the other – a virtual war for public opinion – all over the world.

Gissin told the audience they could help win the virtual war. "Remember to spend the time on the Internet writing letters to the editor, commenting on articles you like or don't like. It makes a change. It makes people listen. It makes people read."

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, Beth Tzedec's senior rabbi, urged the crowd to "support Israel in any way you can," including planning a visit, and giving money for special relief.

Peter Kent, Canada's minister of state of foreign affairs, stressed that Canada continues to be "unequivocal in supporting Israel's right to defend itself against the continued attacks of Hamas."

He said the Canadian government is "urging the continued efforts of the international community to achieve an immediate, sustainable and durable ceasefire and would allow Israel to live beside its neighbours in peace without the threat of continued attacks.

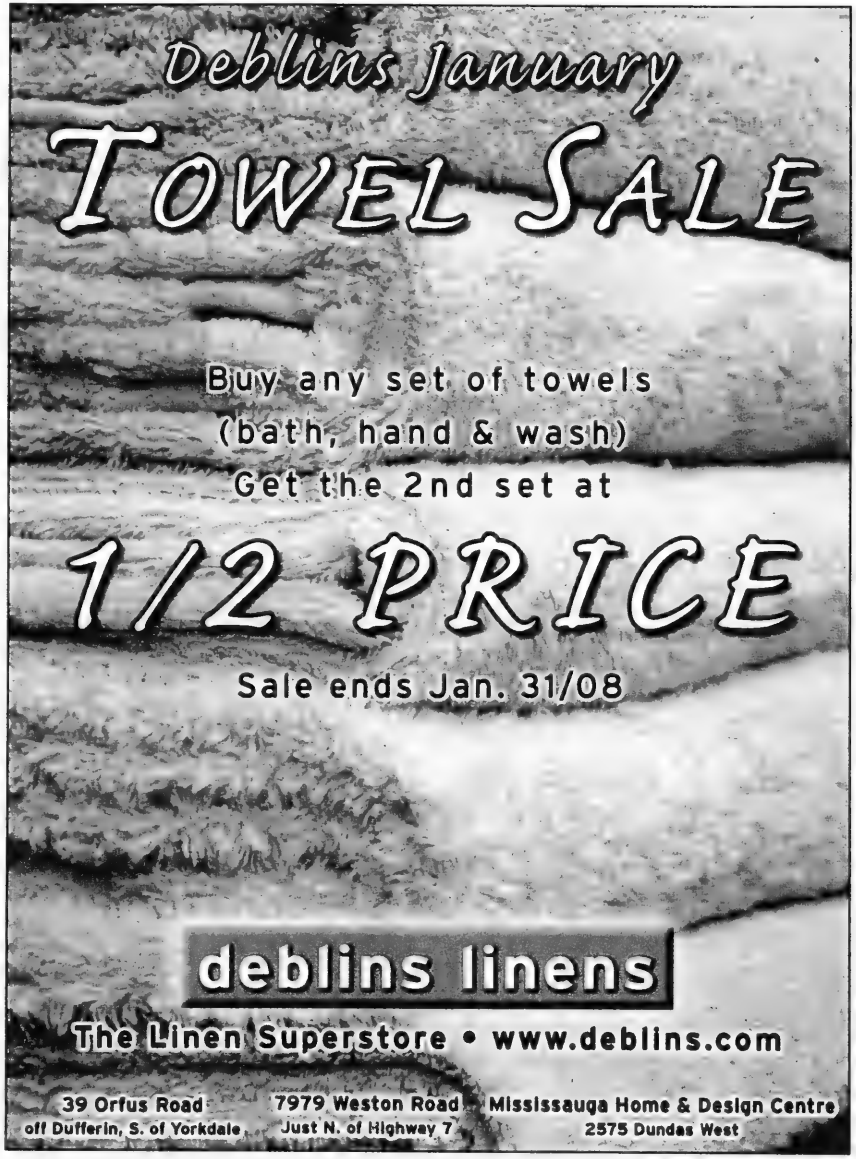
Kent, whose short speech was interrupted several times by applause, said that "our hearts go out" to all innocents who are suffering, on both sides of the conflict.

MC Julia Koschitzky said, "We want Israel to know we believe it has done everything possible to avert this latest crisis in Gaza, and that Israel has a right and responsibility to defend each and every one of its citizens."

In a pre-recorded interview with Yossi Tanuri, director general of UIA Federation Canada's Israel office, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said that Israel doesn't want much. "We just want that our children, our families, in every part of the country, will live in safety and security."

The Toronto event was organized by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy, Canadian Jewish Congress, the Canada Israel Committee and the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee.

Federation has set up a southern Israel relief fund with proceeds to go to trauma relief programs, hotline counselling, respite for children and computers for youngsters to continue their schoolwork while not in class.



Jewish veterans memorial in Earl Bales scrapped

By RON CSILLAG
Special to The CJN

The Jewish War Veterans of Canada's (JVW) much-heralded memorial to Jewish soldiers, planned for Earl Bales Park, will be scrapped after years of inactivity.

A scaled-down version is slated to be built on the grounds of the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, the veterans say, adding that they're still fundraising.

The Toronto Post of the JVW admits that it's in disarray following a shake-up last year of its leadership. But the veterans say a memorial of some kind to Jews who served in the armed forces will be built.

Scaled-down version slated for Bathurst JCC

However, it will bear little or no resemblance to the project that was planned and widely publicized in 2005: an ambitious $7-million work of art to have been built by world-renowned architect Daniel Libeskind and dubbed Flames of Memory.

Set back from Bathurst Street on two acres of land donated by the City of Toronto, it was envisioned as a sweeping, curved structure resembling a chanukiyah that gradually ascended five storeys, topped by eight lights. Slicing through the middle was an arrow-like structure that would act as an eternal flame.

The project also called for a sunken amphitheatre to seat up to 200 people, ringed by two walls, one inscribed with names of Jewish war veterans from around the world, and the other to carry the names of battles in which Jews have fought, including those in Israel. The flags of 30 Allied nations and insignia of the various Canadian armed forces were to have flown.

Ground for the memorial was broken in October, 2005 in front of cabinet ministers, MPs, senators, MPPs, army and police brass, as well as Toronto Mayor David Miller, who called the project "the most significant war memorial erected in Canada in 50 years."

All that is now history, says Toronto councillor Mike Feldman, in whose ward, York Centre, the memorial was to have been built.

"It's pretty well scrapped," Feldman told The CJN. The veterans "weren't able to raise the money."

He called the project "overly ambitious."

The City of Toronto "was prepared to go ahead. But in order to protect the taxpayer, it had to have certain conditions met. [The Jewish war veterans] couldn't meet those conditions, because their fundraising was a bust."

Former JWV executive director Lou Van Delman said that since the project was launched, only about $700,000 of the $7 million has been raised, with most of that going for engineers, seed money and to pay Libeskind for his work to date.

The campaign included raising money for a $2-million endowment fund for maintenance and upkeep.

A sign soliciting funds for Flames of Memory still stands after more than three years in the north end of the park.

Feldman said the city has asked the JWV to take it down.

A new memorial is planned for the grounds of the Bathurst JCC, said the chair of the Toronto Post's board, Morey Eckler.

"It won't look the same [as the original]. I don't think it will be even close to what [Libeskind] proposed."

Eckler said whatever money was raised for the project is in an escrow account, but he didn't know how much that is. "We can't find the records."

He said the Toronto Post has experienced "difficulties" since Van Delman and former Toronto Post commander Hy Shulman were ousted last year.

In the meantime, "we're in the midst of getting rid of bad feelings in the community. It's a big job." The veterans are still soliciting donations, he added.

Feldman said he would like to see the JWV Toronto Post and the General Wingate Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion get together on a single project. "To have two separate groups is ridiculous."

He said this episode has left him "very disappointed," adding that the project's failure is "embarrassing for the Jewish community."

Arthur Drache, an Ottawa lawyer who specializes in tax law, said the JWV, as a registered charity, is entitled to keep whatever money it has raised to date.

"The money goes to the charity, not the project. The funds were not raised under false pretenses."

Neither Libeskind nor Toronto Post commander Norm Gardner were available for comment.

SINGERS COLLECT DONATIONS FOR FOOD BANK: Vocalists of the Renanim Youth Singers collected donations for the Kosher Food Bank at their recent party/talent show. For more information about the choir, visit www.renanimchoirs.com or call the choir's artistic director, Susan Michaels, at 416-449-2296.

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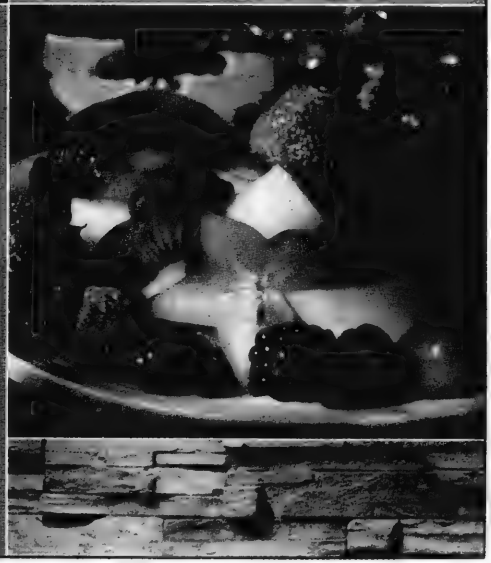

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Ryan's rage

It is the intention of the Ontario wing of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) to pass a resolution at a union meeting next month that will urge universities across the country to ban "Israeli academics" who have not explicitly condemned Israel's actions in Gaza from "doing speaking, teaching or research work at Ontario universities."

The proposal is being promoted by CUPE Ontario president Sid Ryan. It was his outraged response last week to the Israel Defence Forces' destruction of a weapons lab in a university building in Gaza. Israel was shooting back at Hamas and their army of fighters.

"Attacking an institution of learning is just beyond the pale," Ryan said. "They deliberately targeted an institution of learning. That's what the Nazis did." Ryan's comparison of Israel and the Israel Defence Forces to the Nazis was vile and odious, but it was also quite revealing of the man. He apologized for the analogy, but the apology was justifiably suspected to be hollow and insincere. *(Please see the related news story in this issue of the paper.)*

Ryan is correctly upset at the violence and carnage in Gaza. So are we all. So, too, are we all moved and saddened by the terrible toll on the non-combatants in the area. But his accusatory, twitching finger of condemnation is pointed only at Israel. It points not at all, or ever, at the Hamas commanders and fighters who use "civilian" premises and places of worship as military redoubts, weapon laboratories and ordnance storage depots; who hide behind children and who fight mostly without uniform from the neighborhoods, houses and bedrooms of non-combatants.

Nor does Ryan seem bothered, nor has he ever seem bothered, by the fact that since it took control of Gaza, Hamas has deliberately targeted institutions of learning in southern Israel, such as schools, daycare centres and nurseries, as well as the homes, workplaces and play areas of all the ordinary citizens who live there. Such Hamas targeting is simply part of its national master plan, which includes, among other pithy sections, this rather jaunty justification for genocide: "Israel, by virtue of its being Jewish and of having a Jewish population, defies Islam and the Muslims."

No doubt Ryan is a man of soft heart and tender conscience, easily moved to rage and anger at the sight of injustice. But has he publicly expressed rage at, to take but three obvious and alas, ongoing examples, the government of Zimbabwe for the monstrous oppression of its own people, or the government of Sudan for the rape and slaughter in Darfur, or the government of Iran for the vicious victimization of its Baha'i and Kurdish population and – dare we say, too – for incessantly urging Israel be wiped off the map?

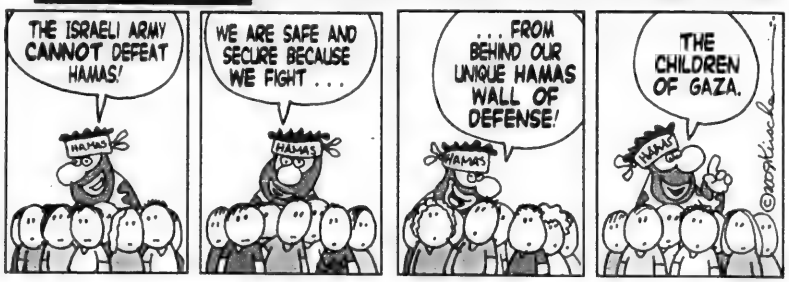
Ryan's selective expression of rage has knocked away the mask of outraged, angry social activist. What we see underneath is a more telling visage. By singling out Israeli academics for boycott, he joins forces with others who strive to demonize and delegitimize Israel, who do their best to separate the Jewish state from the family of nations.

Ryan's outrageous suggestion must be spurned even as he should be upbraided.

25 years ago in The CJN

Lawyer Jerry Grafstein, 49, was appointed to the Canadian Senate, a position he still holds. A longtime supporter of the Liberal Party, he became one of seven Jewish senators.

Dry Bones PROTECTION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WE ARE SAFE AND SECURE BECAUSE WE FIGHT . . .
. . . FROM BEHIND OUR UNIQUE HAMAS WALL OF DEFENSE!
THE CHILDREN OF GAZA.
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Letter from Israel

The following is a letter sent by my relatives in Israel recently. I thought your readers might appreciate how one family feels about present circumstances over there. Their three sons are in the Israel Defence Forces reserves.

"Dear Senta and Peter,

"Thank you for calling us.

"Yes, we are again in war. I remember my mother saying during the Six Day War – when Rami served in the army and she helped me at home with the children who were very young – 'This is not the last war.' I was so angry and asked her, 'How can you be so pessimistic?' But she was right.

"I stopped counting the wars and all the military operations during the years. We are exhausted and hope there will be better times. But Islam has another point of view. Let us hope the world will understand us this time and will give the right support. Lea and Rami Be'eri, Netanya, Israel."

Peter Gilbert
Toronto

* * *

Death knell for Hamas?

For eight years, Hamas has fired thousands of rockets into Israel, into civilian zones. Israel has finally said, "Enough."

Israel sent humanitarian aid into Gaza and dropped leaflets asking the civilians to evacuate certain areas before starting its land incursion to remove Hamas rocket-launching sites. Mosques and residential buildings have been found to house large caches of arms and explosives.

Since Hamas came to power in Gaza, it has built an infrastructure based on a military rather than a civilian foundation. If it was so concerned about the population of Gaza, why did Hamas not use its hundreds of tunnels from Egypt to transport food, water and medicine? Instead, the tunnels were used to smuggle in arms supplied by Iran.

What kind of governing body is Hamas to allow its people to go hungry so it can build rockets that it then hides in their homes. The civilians of Gaza are a human shield against any humane force that tries to remove Hamas from its enclave in the heart of the populace. Israel could eliminate the threat posed by Hamas easily. However, Israel tries to avoid civilian casualties.

Hamas has a death wish for Israel. Could this become the death knell for Hamas?

Harry J. Grunstein
Montreal

Jews should protest loudly, too

As soon as Israel attacks any of its adversaries (read Gaza), there should immediately be a rally in front of the enemy's closest associate or surrogate embassies and consulates around the world. There are always photo-ops for anti-Semites and apologists and a disgusting percentage of left-wing press and sundry, sycophantic media in front of the Israeli (and Canadian, U.S., Australian) embassies, worldwide, no matter what day it is or who is being killed.

What is happening is that when Israel tries to neutralize its enemies, there is damage and deaths, including, collaterally, women and children, and the press constantly shows videos and stills of these scenes, without giving the same exposure to outraged voices and emotions from the Jewish side for balance.

It is time we reversed the game plan and showed up to protest just as loudly as the other side does, not at the Israeli embassy, but at the doorstep of our indiscriminate killers' and wounders' representatives, so that the same press will be forced to cover the story created by us being in the opponent's front yard, for a change, for all to see.

If we defend ourselves but don't protest and aren't seen as suffering, and don't get exposure for our plight, then we will continue to be thought of as arrogant and unconcerned about humanity. There has been an indoctrination perpetrated in front of us all by the newsbaggers who incessantly and obsessively, subliminally and overtly, carry the underdog message of the indigent Palestinians or the illegitimate mantra of the Arabs' displacement, but not that of our Jews.

Victor Redlick
Toronto

* * *

Jews demonstrate on Palestinian side

I was at the demonstration in front of the Israeli consulate in Toronto on Dec. 28 and can testify to the presence of many Jews on the Palestinian side, as well as a group of Quakers ("Israeli offensive touches off protests in Canada," CJN, Jan. 1). We weren't noisy, but we were there.

In fact, we – a group of mostly Jewish women – have been holding a vigil in front of the Israeli consulate every Friday night for about eight years, against the occupation.

As for the pro-Israel side, I consider it highly significant that the only people who came out to defend the indefensible were members of the Jewish Defence League, and not even very many of them.

Elizabeth Block
Toronto

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Hamas using human shields, report charges

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Hamas has made extensive use of Palestinian civilians as human shields in the current fighting in the Gaza Strip, says an Israeli report.

The 81-page report, compiled by the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, was released last week, just days before the Israeli army shelled a United Nations school in Gaza, resulting in the deaths of some 40 Palestinians.

An Israeli army spokesperson said that Hamas fighters, having barricaded themselves inside the school, fired mortar rounds at Israeli troops, prompting Israel to return the fire. The United Nations denied that Hamas personnel had been in the school.

The report was completed during the first week of Operation Cast Lead, launched by Israel on Dec. 27 after Hamas broke a six-month truce and fired a barrage of rockets and mortars into Israel.

Prepared with the assistance of the Israel Defence Force's Advocate General's Corps, the report says that Hamas has made "calculated" and "cynical" use of Palestinian civilians so as to sway public opinion in Gaza and blacken Israel's image in the international community.

Palestinians inspect a building that was destroyed by an Israeli air strike in Rafah, a town near the Gaza Strip's border with Egypt, on Jan. 8.

[Abed Rahim Khatib/ FLASH90 photo]

The centre, located north of Tel Aviv and headed by a retired Israeli colonel named Reuven Erlich, accuses Hamas of deliberately having established its military infrastructure in and around residential areas and eight densely populated refugee camps in Gaza, which is home to 1.5 million Palestinians.

Hamas' use of human shields was inspired by Hezbollah's tactics in Lebanon during the 2006 war. As the report states, "Hamas and other terrorist organizations copied and developed Hezbollah's warfare doctrine, which is based on exploiting the civilian population as human shields."

It adds, "Using civilians as human shields is a war crime, a grave breach of the laws of armed conflict and a crime against humanity."

Charging that Hamas has fired Qassam rockets and mortar shells at Israeli civilians from private homes, schools, mosques and hospitals, the centre says, "The rocket launching squads deliberately situate their launchers near houses to camouflage themselves and to protect themselves from the Israel Defence Forces. The attacks carried out by the terrorists only disrupt the daily lives of the Palestinian population and endanger them."

According to the centre, Hamas used similar tactics when the Israeli army raided Gaza in March 2008 and in October 2006.

It goes on to say that the Palestinians have paid a heavy price for Hamas' policy, which has turned civilians into virtual hostages and forced them into a situation of "unending combat" with Israel.

Citing a "fundamental contradiction" between the needs of Palestinian civilians and Hamas policies, the centre points out that Hamas has continually attacked Israeli crossing points, thereby interrupting the flow of food, water, medical supplies and petroleum into Gaza.

In addition, Hamas has targeted a nearby power plant in Ashkelon that provides Gaza with two-thirds of its electricity.

Justifying Israel's bombing of the Islamic University on Dec. 28, the centre says it housed a weapons research facility in which long-range rockets for use against Israel were developed.

The centre also claims that the majority of the workshops that manufacture rockets are in densely populated neighbourhoods.

"Situating them in the heart of the civilian population endangers the welfare of local residents, both because of 'work accidents' and because it exposes them to possible IDF attacks."

As well, the centre says, the extensive system of arms smuggling tunnels were built in urban settings, thereby exposing civilians to Israeli bombing raids.

And in contravention of international law and moral principles, Hamas has recruited children for operational missions, the report states.

In summation, the centre says, "Hamas' violent and deliberate attacks against Israeli civilians and civilian objects is accompanied by [its] equally callous disregard for the safety of Palestinian civilians... in Gaza.

"By launching attacks from within the confines of densely populated areas, by storing missiles and rocket launchers under mosques and homes, by using university facilities and other protected places to develop weapons and explosives, Hamas systematically abuses the protections afforded to civilians and civilian objects under international law, while placing the safety and welfare of these civilians at great risk."

Gaza collaborators face execution

By AMIRA HASS
© Ha'retz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Since the aerial attack on Gaza began, Hamas has sought to suppress individuals it believes endanger the group's fight against Israel and its hold on power in the strip, as well as public morale. Prime targets include Fatah members, people convicted or suspected of collaborating with Israel, and "common" criminals.

"Hamas rules with an iron fist even now," said one resident. A political activist who says he supports neither Hamas nor Fatah said that given the difficult conditions created by the ongoing shelling and ground invasion, Hamas is likely to try to prevent collaborators or those suspected to be from working with Israel.

Since the operation began on Dec. 27, Hamas operatives have executed several people that it classified as collaborators. Members of the group have confirmed the executions took place and said the victims had admitted giving information to the Shin Bet security service that resulted in the deaths of Palestinians or had already been sentenced to death by a Palestinian military court, but the sentences were delayed for various reasons.

Independent sources said that among the dead were those not known publicly to have been collaborators, as well as others long suspected of co-operation with Israel, or those arrested and later released.

Estimates of the number of suspects executed range from 40 to 80, but amid the prevailing conditions – shelling, fear of walking the streets and media blackouts – it's virtually impossible to verify the numbers or identities of the dead.

Executions are carried out secretly. In Rafah, for example, at least some of the victims were killed in a caravan erected in the area formerly occupied by the Rafiah Yam settlement, and the victims' relatives were invited to take away the bodies.

Even in the current conditions, Hamas is continuing to arrest those it suspects of criminal activity or Fatah membership, many of whom were arrested on the eve of the Israel Defence Forces operation and fled detention when the shelling began. No one knows where the detained are being held.

Independent sources and those linked with Fatah say Hamas' common methods include confiscating cellphones, beatings, house arrest and firing at a suspect's legs.

Fatah members say Hamas is following a policy dictated by its leadership and directed against Fatah as a whole. An official in Gaza's Hamas-run interior ministry told Ha'aretz that the steps were taken only against Fatah members who expressed "happiness" at the aerial attack and even "distributed candy" in the streets as it began. An independent source corroborated Hamas' account.

Opinions

In defence of Israel

It's very hard to read letters to the editor or to listen to radio talk shows in which people rant and rave against Israel. The things they say about Israel seem so far-fetched, so outrageous that surely no one agrees with them. But the sad fact is that many do agree. Many find the rhetoric of hate reasonable and suggestive. The comparison of the Israeli Defence Forces to Nazi soldiers might seem revolting and utterly fallacious to us, but there are some who find it accurate and comforting.

Norma Baumel Joseph in Montreal

So what do we do about it?

Do we wring our hands in pain and worry? Do we bemoan the lack of hasbarah – proper Israeli public relations and explanation? Do we lay the blame on the State of Israel? If we do that, making only Israel responsible, then we are like the enemy, finding fault with Israel and giving everyone else a free ride in this complex world of propaganda and war.

It seems clear at times that Hamas and their sympathizers have won the war of words. They were designated terrorists and are now called victims. How did they turn the tables on us? The major world powers listed them as a key terrorist organization. Funds to them were not allowed on charitable lists. Now everyone wants to weep for them as they hide behind children and in hospitals.

The IDF has done a remarkable job defending Israel after Hamas broke the ceasefire and fired rockets into civilian areas. The newspapers reported it clearly. Israeli and U.S. government spokespeople reiterated these facts often. So where is popular opinion?

Most people, I believe, aren't fooled. Yet, the more they are bombarded by these words of victimization and pity for Palestinians, the more they will be swayed, or at least be less supportive of Israel.

So what must you and I do?

Stand up and be counted! How? Defend Israel with your words. Speak out. I know it's not easy. The opportunities are not convenient or welcoming. It means putting yourself out there for ridicule and even hostility. It sometimes means getting involved with loud and rude people. It means being in uncomfortable situations. It means knowing what's going on.

But we should know the facts. We should be the spokespeople. We know that Israel did not initiate, but only reacted. We should know that Israel is protecting its citizens. We should know that Israel withdrew from Gaza and left the land to Hamas, and it is, therefore, responsible for the horrid conditions. Hamas chose to spend resources on rockets rather than medical supplies, on warriors rather than doctors.

Israel is defending itself as best it can. We should defend it as best we can.

Two lives, two legacies

At the beginning of January, two people, in two very different parts of the world, died. Both were consumed by passion for a cause.

Helen Suzman will be remembered as one of the few white South African politicians to oppose the odious theology of apartheid. She served in South Africa's parliament for 36 years, again and again challenging the country's leaders on their oppression of the black majority in that country.

Jean M. Gerber in Vancouver

She was a close friend of Nelson Mandela, visiting him and other opponents in prison and enduring years of taunts, obscene phone calls and threats to her life.

Many Jewish South Africans who also opposed apartheid voted with their feet, leaving the country during its years of distress – and enriching Israeli and Canadian Jewish communities in doing so.

But Suzman, born to Lithuanian Jewish parents who immigrated to South Africa, stayed the course. While not a fan of the worldwide boycott of her country, since she believed it harmed the very people it was intended to help, nevertheless she was at all times an outspoken critic of this policy of exclusion and lived to see it dismantled.

Her passion for justice never failed. Not content with helping to end apartheid, she remained a critic of the recent government, which fostered outlandish ideas about AIDS and continued to support the terrible Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

The same week that she died, another person passed into history. Nizar Rayan was killed during the first phase of Israel's attack on Gaza and its Hamas leadership.

Rayan was also passionate – passionate about his hatred of Israel. He was, according to reports, a "hardline theologian and military commander."

Give him his due. He believed passionately that Hamas leaders should live among the people openly – unlike many who apparently live in hiding, coming out only to shoot rockets or people. He believed so passionately in the cause of Israel's destruction that he sent his own 22-year-old son as a suicide bomber into Israel, and to certain death. His surviving son reportedly remains "committed to the resistance."

Rayan fought with his own troops, according to press accounts of his death, and was an "iconic" figure, revered for his passionate and total commitment to the destruction of Israel. He died along with many family members and at least two of his four wives in the Jabaliya refugee camp.

Consider these two lives and the passion each felt for the causes they espoused.

Suzman committed her life to creating a more just society in her homeland. When it was physically dangerous to do so, she spoke out when terrible things happened, including the murder of black activist Steve Biko – a death that she insisted had to be examined. Even after leaving parliament, she helped oversee the first multiracial elections in South Africa and was proud to be deemed an enemy by Mugabe.

Today, South Africa, for all its problems, is a place she was proud to call home. It owes her much.

Rayan, too, was proud to be a fighter against the state he perceived as the enemy, even sacrificing his own son in a bizarre parody of the Christian belief in atonement through the crucifixion.

But what is Rayan's monument? Continued warfare, a failed and ruined Gaza that's incapable of feeding its own people and that's spending aid money only for rockets with which to terrorize Israel.

And why did Rayan die in a refugee camp? Years after Hamas took over the Gaza Strip, why are there still camps, instead of more homes, farms and businesses?

Even the ability of Gaza residents to work in such shared places as the Erez industrial area was taken away due to attacks. Greenhouses left by evacuated settlers were destroyed, not revitalized.

The Jewish icon of passion for a cause was Pinchas, who upon seeing an Israelite man copulating with a Midianite woman drove his spear through them both, thus supposedly earning the priesthood. But the rabbis were very quick to declare that his was a one-time act, not to be repeated.

Halachah, not individual passion, was to drive rabbinic Judaism.

The rabbis wisely realized that passion for a cause that's not contained by moral codes would quickly lead to chaos.

On writing a column

There are many reasons why writers choose to put their ideas and opinions into words and share them with others. Whether they engage in formal writing in books, academic journals, newspapers or even blogs or whether they share their thoughts in private letters or e-mails, a writer usually works in isolation and does not always know the impact that his or her work has on readers. Writing can be a solitary occupation

Gerald L. Gall in Edmonton

Over the years, I have done a significant amount of writing in both my professional and personal life. When it comes to letters, e-mails and speeches, the response from readers or listeners is usually clear. Phone calls, replies or questions can be almost immediate.

Since newspapers include columns from a variety of contributors, as well as photographs, announcements and advertisements, it is almost impossible to know which articles subscribers choose to read in any given edition. The kinds of articles written, including news features, announcements and editorial opinions, their location and headlines all influence whether a person will take the time to read what someone has spent time writing.

In my CJN columns, I have primarily written about Jewish issues, but also Canadian issues that transcend our particular community. I have often focused on legal issues and topics of important societal concern. But each time, I am always mindful of a central objective or mission – namely, whether readers of The CJN would find my narrative to be clear, interesting, and informative while I address some of the challenging issues that we, as a community, face every day. All this in just 700 words.

The responses that I have received after the publication of each article have been interesting. After almost five years and more than 50 columns, I continue to receive e-mails and phone calls from people who wish to engage me in further discussion with respect to the issues I have raised. These personal comments made to me by friends, relatives and regular CJN readers, as well as leaders of our organized Jewish community who have been particularly interested in the various topics I have covered, are valuable. This feedback has been most gratifying, and it makes the entire process worthwhile.

Although I write for a variety of audiences, I am particularly pleased to contribute to a national Jewish forum that reaches Jewish communities across our country. The CJN is a well-prepared, professionally edited account of key events and issues confronting Canadian Jews. It offers a vehicle to keep abreast of current events and opinions in the Jewish community both here in Canada and abroad.

It is true that most of the domestic news and almost all of the paid advertisements in The CJN are directed at a central Canadian audience. This is not surprising, considering that the majority of the Canadian Jewish population resides in central Canada – namely, Ontario and Quebec.

Jews in smaller communities across Canada often suffer from a lack of resources and receive little attention or support from the majority of Canadian Jews. These communities often feel isolated. At one time, the Canadian Jewish Congress had a small-communities committee, but this no longer exists. The present leadership of Congress, however, is seriously committed to addressing the issue of the declining smaller communities. Local publications, printed (for example, the Edmonton Jewish News) and online (such as the Jewish Pipeline) do provide information and a sense of belonging to individuals in some smaller communities.

While Alberta has a dynamic and thriving Jewish community of more than 10,000 people, I meet very few people here who subscribe to The CJN. The CJN does include some information about distant communities, but, more importantly, it provides a way for people in outlying areas to feel connected to a greater Canadian Jewish community.

The contributions of regional columnists from across Canada have become a vehicle for sharing the views of and uniting members of our community from coast to coast. In short, The CJN serves as a national voice of Canadian Jewry.

So, when this columnist puts his ideas and opinions into written words, the objective is not only to inform the readers and encourage further thought, but also to contribute to this national voice.

The Kirshner File

Israel strives for 'a new reality' in the region

As Israeli armour and infantry thrust deeper into the teeming Gaza Strip last week in a concerted attempt to inflict still more crippling blows against Hamas after a punishing one-week air campaign, Israel announced it would not return to the status quo ante. Three weeks after Hamas aggressively broke an already shaky six-month ceasefire and thereby invited the wrath of an unfettered Israeli military response, Israel made it clear that the rules of the game had irrevocably changed.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Amid shortages of food, water and medical supplies in the besieged Gaza Strip and a growing civilian toll, Israel firmly rebuffed increasingly frantic calls by the United Nations, the European Union and the Arab world for an immediate truce. Israel's rationale, supported by the vast majority of its citizenry and the Diaspora, was that if Israel acceded to these international pleas and abruptly halted Operation Cast Lead, it would have achieved little of lasting significance and only strengthened the hand of Hamas and its radical, rejectionist allies, Iran and Hezbollah.

Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, must be held fully responsible and accountable for the latest round of fighting. Hamas, which opposes a two-state solution and thus Israel's very existence, brought this tragic and avoidable conflict upon itself by breaking the ceasefire that Egypt had laboriously produced.

Hamas – which violently seized control of Gaza from the Palestinian Authority in a coup in June 2007 and then proceeded to transform it into an armed camp – did not lift a finger to enforce the truce. The blinkered, ideologically bound leaders of Hamas permitted smaller factions, such as Islamic Jihad, to sporadically shell Israeli communities and allowed armed fighters to try to infiltrate the border fence. And as always, Hamas continued to import Iranian long-range rockets, arms and munitions through a maze of tunnels from Egypt. Amid these provocations, Israel acted with relative restraint.

This past November, in the first such incident of its kind since the truce went into effect on June 19, Israel and Hamas clashed in a direct confrontation after Israeli troops destroyed a tunnel perilously close to the border. Israel had a well-founded fear that Hamas intended to use it to abduct yet more Israeli soldiers. It will be recalled that Israel launched its last big incursion into Gaza, in June 2006, after Hamas attacked an Israeli outpost and kidnapped Cpl. Gilad Schalit, who remains imprisoned despite Israel's best efforts to free him.

As a result of last November's flareup, Hamas abandoned the ceasefire, such as it was, and began firing hundreds of short and long-range missiles at Israel. On Dec. 25, Christmas Day, 80 such projectiles hit Israel. Israel's outgoing prime minister, Ehud Olmert, issued a dire warning, saying that devastating consequences lay in store if Hamas did not cease and desist. Meanwhile, in Cairo, Israel's foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, told Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak that Israel's patience was wearing thin. "Enough is enough," she declared, saying that the situation had become unbearable and intolerable.

Several months prior to Livni's appearance in Cairo, Defence Minister Ehud Barak warned Hamas that "a serious operation" into Gaza – an invasion – could be expected if Hamas did not come to its senses.

Willfully ignoring Barak's warning, Hamas let the ceasefire run out. Hamas was intoxicated by its warped and arrogant assumption that Israel would step back from the brink before invading Gaza, a poor, congested sliver of land that Israel unilaterally relinquished in 2005 and which is populated by 1.5 million Palestinians, the majority of whom are refugees from previous Arab-Israeli wars.

Israel launched the first phase of Operation Cast Lead on Dec. 27, explaining that no self-respecting country on earth could tolerate a next-door terrorist entity threatening and endangering its civilian population. Hamas was aware of the possible consequences, Israel having declared war on Hamas in 2004 after assassinating its supreme leader, Ahmed Yassin. Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, their obligatory verbal blasts against Israel notwithstanding, rightfully blamed Hamas for igniting the latest round of fighting.

This time, Israel means business. For one week, the Israeli Air Force and navy bombed strategic and symbolic targets in Gaza, blasting rocket launchers, weapons storage depots, metal work shops, smuggling tunnels, government buildings, communication facilities, and the legislature. The homes of top-ranking Hamas officials were also targeted, and among the commanders Israel killed was Nizar Rayyan, who once brazenly said, "We will never recognize Israel. There is nothing called Israel, neither in reality nor in the imagination."

As well, Israel bombed mosques and civilian buildings where weapons were deliberately stored. In reckless fashion, Hamas placed them there to score propaganda points against Israel.

In an attempt to avert a humanitarian crisis, Israel permitted convoys of trucks bearing food, water, medicine and fuel into Gaza. But Israel cordoned off Gaza to journalists, correctly fearing that stark and disturbing images of injured and dead Palestinians and of gutted buildings would play into Hamas' hands and force it to agree to a premature ceasefire.

Hamas prisoners captured by Israel last week
[Israel Sun photo]

Despite the bombing sorties, which claimed the lives of hundreds of Palestinian fighters and civilians, Hamas continued firing rockets and mortars at Israel, killing three civilians. Some of the missiles struck long-suffering localities such as Sderot and Ashkelon, but others reached as far as Ashdod, Be'er Sheva and Yavne, validating Israeli fears that Hamas had vastly improved and upgraded its arsenal during the six-month calm.

Unable to deal effectively with this vexing problem by air power alone, Israel initiated the second phase of its offensive with a ground invasion on Jan. 3. In what was described as fierce fighting in northern and eastern Gaza, Israel captured largely uninhabited areas where rockets and mortars have been launched. And in a replay of the urban warfare Israel conducted in southern Lebanon in the summer of 2006 and in the West Bank in the spring of 2002, Israel expanded and deepened its operation by attacking fortifications, bunkers and crowded neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, Israel was unable to deliver a knock-out blow and Hamas remained standing, pummeling Israeli towns as far away as Gedera, which is only 30 kilometres from Tel Aviv. Last week, the Home Front Command suggested that Rehovot and Rishon LeZion are also within rocket range.

In this war of self defence against the forces of Islamic radicalism, Israel wants to "change the equation" and create "a new reality" in the region, as Livni and Barak have succinctly explained. Israel's short-term objective is to restore tranquility in the south so that 900,000 Israelis can live in peace and not be intimidated by Hamas rocketry. In this connection, Israel seeks a durable and permanent ceasefire based on a new and rigorous monitoring system. (The Israeli government should not lift its current blockade of Gaza until Hamas recognizes Israel, renounces terrorism and accepts agreements signed by Israel and the Palestinian Authority. With Hamas implacably hostile to Israel, Olmert can safely dismiss Hamas' demand to extend the truce to the West Bank.)

Beyond these aims, Israel's objectives should be to disable, if not destroy, Hamas' military infrastructure. In addition, Israel should attempt to weaken the aggressive and irresponsible Hamas government in Gaza – which has brought only misery, hardship and bloodshed to its people – and to reassert its deterrent power following the inconclusive war in Lebanon.

Israel cannot afford to lose this war, because anything less than a victory will be interpreted by Hamas as a defeat and embolden its cocky allies, Hezbollah and Iran.

So a hasty ceasefire can wait. Hamas must be crushed. But will the international community grant Israel sufficient time, understanding and leeway to do what is absolutely necessary?

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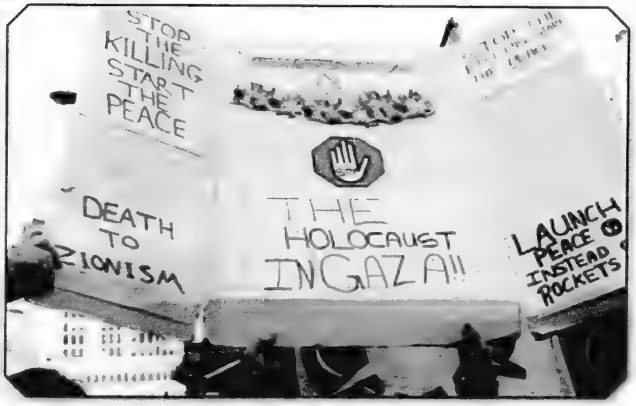
Toronto's Anti-Israel Protest

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Recently, protestors against Israel's military action to stop nearly eight years of Hamas missile attacks against southern Israel, gathered in downtown Toronto. Although opposition to Israel's actions represents a legitimate point of view in a democratic society, several signs condemned Jews, Zionism and even Israel's existence, in addition to comparing Israel's military activities to the Holocaust.



UJA supports the people of Southern Israel

Special programs meet urgent needs of besieged residents

By Daniel Horowitz

As Israel's military action against Hamas in Gaza continues, residents from Israel's southern region continue to be targets of Hamas missiles. Close to one million Israelis are now in the range of missiles from Gaza, and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, through UIA Federations Canada (UIAFC), continues to assist these terror victims through initiatives in both Toronto, and in Israel.

Together with its partner agencies and dozens of community sponsors, UJA Federation held a successful rally last week at Beth Tzedec Congregation, where thousands of local residents stood in solidarity with the people of Israel, while denouncing terrorism. As the situation in Israel intensified, UJA also initiated its Southern Israel Relief Fund which has already raised more than $50,000. Funds raised will be distributed by UIAFC.

UJA and UIAFC are also on the ground in Israel working with local communities in this time of crisis. Below is a partial list of funded initiatives that are helping the people of Israel's southern region:

- The Community Outreach Unit of Natal – Israel Trauma Centre for Victims of Terror and War - is currently providing community based crisis intervention services for municipal and social services workers, new immigrants and the mentally handicapped throughout the region, many of whom are exhibiting signs of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

- A group of youth from the UJA–funded Etgarim program in Sderot that offers youth at risk outdoor activities was welcomed at a community centre in Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel. Since then, children from the embattled region and their families have be given a respite from the constant rocket attacks, by being sent north to spend time at Canada Centre in Metulla where they can engage in sports activities including hockey, swimming and table-tennis.

- 1,500 young people from rocket-ravaged Sderot and Be'ersheva have been taken on day outings away from the region. The goal is to take 7,000 children to remove them from the constant sense of anxiety that they are forced to endure.

- A group of Ethiopian families – over 50 people – traveled to Eilat to get away from the stress of the constant missile attacks. UJA Federation partners arranged for meals and activities for the group.

- UJA/UIAFC Ayalim projects – student villages that encourage young adults to study and live in peripheral areas in Israel - have been very active in offering their support. Yachini Village, a few minutes away from Sderot, sent its youngest students, 19 year-olds who defer their IDF service for a year in order to volunteer and give back to the community, along with some of their students to volunteer in Sderot.

- CIE Birthright Israel groups visited Bat Yam recently, and together with Ethiopian youth members, prepared "goody bags" to be distributed amongst the bomb shelters in Sderot and the surrounding region.

- As a result of school being cancelled for close to 200,000 youngsters in the region, students are being provided with computers to enable them to participate in online classes and studies.

Additional aid is being sent to the region's most vulnerable, including the disabled and the elderly.

UJA's other partners in Israel, the Joint American Jewish Distribution Committee (JDC) and the Jewish Agency (JAFI) have expanded their support in the region. The JDC will provide more case workers for 25,000 elderly and disabled residents. The Jewish Agency will provide 23,500 children with respite trips away from the conflict zone, purchase computers for children so they can continue schoolwork, provide supplies and provisions for bomb shelters, and provide counseling and therapy for immigrants housed in absorption centers.

United Jewish Appeal is already providing more than $2 million dollars in urgent assistance to the rocket stricken residents of Sderot, through UIA Federations Canada. To contribute to the Southern Israel Relief Fund, please visit www.jewishtoronto.com and click on the Relief Fund icon.

A young boy from Sderot is greeted by youth volunteers in Metulla, in northern Israel. The youngster was sent to Metulla with others from the rocket-stricken city of Sderot, as a respite trip funded by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, through UIA Federations Canada.

Children from the Sderot region enjoy some time in Metulla's Canada Centre.

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The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

Jewish Life

Every Jew has a name

By RABBI AVRAHAM PLOTKIN

Rabbinic Reflections

A young Jewish mother walks her son to the school bus on his first day of preschool.

"Please behave, my *bubaleh*," she says.

"Take good care of yourself and think about your mother who is waiting for you, *tataleh*!"

"And come right back home on the bus, my *shepseleh*."

"Remember, your mommy loves you a lot, my *sweeteleh*!"

At the end of the school day, the bus returns. She runs to her son and hugs him.

"So what did the love of my life learn on his first day of school?" she asks.

"I learned my name is David," is the boy's response.

This week, in synagogues around the world, we will all begin reading a brand new book, the second book of the Torah called Shmot, which is literally translated as the book of "Names." The reason for this unusual name is that the book happens to open up with the word "names" in its opening line: "Now these are the names of the children of Israel…" (Exodus 1:1).

This is quite intriguing. Why name an entire book after a seemingly coincidental word in the opening line? Wouldn't it be more logical to name it after its storyline, or as it is referred to in most English bibles simply as the Book of Exodus?

But perhaps there is an important lesson here. The second book of the Torah introduces us to the new nation of Israel, a nation that in a short period of time in Egypt, transformed and proliferated from the small family of Jews in the first book of Genesis into the quantitatively fruitful nation in the new book of "Names."

Yet, despite this amazing numeric growth, the Torah reminds us not to forget that each individual person has a name and must be recognized and respected. Maturing into a large nation should not translate into, God forbid, neglecting the needs of the individual, treating him or her like a number or statistic.

If there is anything we can learn from the present war in Israel, it is precisely that every Jew has a name. We, as a people, are ready to risk our lives and put our children in harm's way just to save the life of even one person living in Sderot or any other part of Israel. To me, the current war in Israel underscores the principle of *kol yisrael arevim zeh lazeh* – every Jewish person is responsible for the other. A Jew in the north must defend the Jew in the south and vice versa. All of Israel will come to the defence of a few Jews, no matter how few, to save them from rockets or any other form of assault. This is what makes us all so proud of being Jewish – our amazing commitment to save the life of even a single Jew. Every Jew truly has a name!

I happened to be standing at a recent prayer gathering for the people of Israel beside a father of an Israeli soldier. We were sharing a Book of Psalms. I listened carefully as he whispered the ancient words of King David and pronounced each word so carefully and with so much concentration.

I looked at the tears in his eyes and thought to myself how I would feel if this was my own child on the frontlines of battle. Then it dawned on me that, in fact, this was my child. This child was fighting for my survival and for the future of all of the Jewish people. He is not just another soldier. He has a name, and I can never forget that.

A little more than a month ago, the world was shocked by the brutal murders at the Chabad centre in Mumbai, and especially the murders of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Holtzberg, emissaries of the Lubavitcher Rebbe of blessed memory.

One of the points that I believe really endeared the Holtzbergs to people who never met them was their commitment to every single Jew, even in remote Mumbai. They gave unconditional love to a travelling Israeli soldier or a North American businessperson as if they were their own children. They understood very well the principle that every Jewish person is indispensible to the well-being of the entire people of Israel, and they lived and died for that cause.

We must all learn from the Holtzbergs' example to embrace every single Jew in our own community and take care of their material and spiritual needs as if they were our own children. They are all individuals with names, indispensible parts of our nation and our future depends on them.

Rabbi Avraham Plotkin is spiritual leader of Chabad Lubavitch of Markham.

Another chance to get it right

IDEAS ON IDENTITY

By Rabbi Elyse Goldstein

"Should old acquaintance be forgot…"

It's January 2009 – a brand new (secular) year. Unless you live in Israel, this secular new year is your new year, too. Unless you write 5769 in your chequebook, it's safe to assume that you'll be writing 2009 and "Judazing" the change of year in January by wishing your co-workers a "happy and healthy…"

Just short of saying Shanah Tovah, we are caught up in the real world of living in the Diaspora during all of December and into the first weeks of January.

Chanukah and Christmas coming on each other's heels this year made it all one big mish-mash of a "holiday season." We can build all the Sukkahs we want in the fall, but it's those stringed lights across the street that shine in our windows through most of December that frame our existence in Canada.

So I can't help but be glad that we Jews have not one, but two opportunities during the course of a year to think about change, redirection and new beginnings.

Yes, there are drunken parties on Dec. 31, and yes, the "holiday" has its excesses. But most of us are thoughtful folks who can make new year's resolutions six months after we've made new year's resolutions and do a winter stock-taking that will ask us if we've kept those well-intentioned pledges we made on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Maybe the secular new year gives us a second chance to make good on the promises of Kol Nidre before next Kol Nidre tells us that it's too late.

I don't growl at people who wish me a happy new year in January. I see them as messengers of the reminder that I still have work to do to complete the change that I promised myself one long day in synagogue back in October.

At the best of times, most people don't seek change. It took us millions of years to evolve into who and what we are now.

The human disposition and the human body doesn't like change. Neanderthal man didn't wake up one day and say, "Gee, I'd like to move on and become Cro-Magnon man." Look at your kids: when their bodies make big changes in adolescence, it makes them moody and tense.

As much as we might crave excitement, we generally like to know what comes next. As much as we love to travel, we like to come home to our own beds. We are creatures of habit. People like things just the way they are, so any resolutions we make about change – especially about change that takes hard, inner work – will be tough, and we will procrastinate and avoid and make excuses.

So another "reminder" is not all that bad. Facing our "change demons" twice a year is twice as hard, but it gives us two chances to move forward in our lives.

So make those resolutions once again, and happy new year once again.

Jewish Life

In God we trust

Money Matters

By Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

With the drop in net worth that many have experienced, I had planned to write about the need for even greater efforts of tzedakah. With so many more needy people and many organizations suffering heavy financial losses, those who are in a position to do so should dig a little deeper and share a greater percentage of their wealth.

For many, the idea of being able to lose money in the markets would be a great blessing – indicating that they actually have money to invest. How fortunate are those who donated large sums of money, thereby helping so many before they had the opportunity to lose those sums in the markets.

Unfortunately, along came Bernie Madoff – isn't it amazing how prescient names can be? – who has the apparent ignominy of singlehandedly losing somewhere in the neighbourhood of $600,000,000 to $1 billion dollars (US) in charitable funds, not to mention the billions of dollars lost by individuals, many of whom were among the largest Jewish philanthropists.

Compounding the losses is the fact that many organizations which lost money didn't even know they were investing with Madoff. Rather, they invested with third parties that turned around – at times without the knowledge of the organizations – and invested in what we now know to be the world's largest Ponzi scheme.

Corruption, fraud, cutting corners and lack of full disclosure are symptoms of human greed and the desire for riches. And these symptoms don't confine themselves to the corporate boardroom. They extend to the world of philanthropy as well. The same people who can be involved in so much good can at the same time fall victim to – let's be charitable here – unprofessional conduct.

The financial system, by its very nature, is built on trust. Once that trust evaporates, the system collapses. This loss of trust is the underlying cause of the current credit crisis, with lenders afraid they may not be able to collect on their loans.

Because many charities are run informally, lacking the checks and balances one would typically find in a well-run business, it's even more imperative that only the people of the highest integrity be involved in the charitable sector.

"One should not give even a *prutah* [a penny] to the communal charity purse unless it is under the supervision of a person [as honest as] Rabbi Chananyah ben Teradyon" (Bava Batra 10b). The Talmud relates how Rabbi Chananyah, when he was the trustee for charitable funds, paid from his pocket for monies that were inadvertently used for different charitable purposes.

It's noteworthy that the Torah consistently uses the expression "and you shall fear God" in the context of our monetary dealings and never in the context of "rituals." True fear of God is a guarantee of an efficient and honest marketplace. The need for fear of a higher authority is especially true in areas where one is forced to rely on the assessments and judgment of others – where by its very nature, it's impossible to tell whether one is acting in good faith or only claiming to be doing so. Only God truly knows if your stockbrokers' advice was given for your benefit or their own.

It takes much more moral strength to be a pious businessman than to be a pious religious leader. Our rabbis are most effusive in praising those who toil honestly to support themselves.

Only the truly pious fully appreciate that – notwithstanding hard work, talent and ingenuity – whatever success they achieve is a blessing from God. It's a blessing that must be shared with others at all times, and especially when economic times are tough.

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org

After Madoff

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

The fallout from the Bernard Madoff affair is well-known. Scores of investors, including major U.S. Jewish organizations, have lost tens of millions of dollars. **[tinyurl.com/madoff12]**

Canadian charities have not escaped Madoff, with the Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto reporting a modest $486,000 hit. **[tinyurl.com/madoff17]**

The Jewish Highway

The question many charities and donors are now asking is, "What's next for Jewish fundraising?"

Writing in the Wall Street Journal, Lucette Lagnado asks, "When the Big Spenders Fail, Who Will Save Jewish Charity?" She looks at how in recent years, Jewish federations in the United States have focused on "top end" donors because it seemed more cost effective than going after small donors. In 1988, the federations had 814,000 donors. By 2007, donors dropped below half a million. Lagnado suggests that this scandal presents an opportunity to strengthen community ties – and bring back once ubiquitous pushkes into our homes. **[tinyurl.com/madoff13]**

Rebecca Spence continues that theme in Forward.com. "Now, observers predict, Jewish groups will increasingly take their cue from the more grass-roots, web-based fundraising efforts that proved so successful in the campaign of president-elect Barack Obama.

'People are going to pay a lot of attention to the way Mr. Obama raised money and that ability to aggregate donors,' said Jonathan Sarna, a professor at Brandeis University, 'some of whom have felt that they were perhaps not as welcomed by these charities, which paid more attention to older donors.'" **[tinyurl. com/ madoff03]**

Rabbi Marc Gellman focuses on the toll the scandal has taken on the organizations and the community at large in an open letter to Madoff in Newsweek. "There must be some new word invented to describe the way you have redefined betrayal. The Bible calls such things a *toevah*, an abomination. It means an act so alien to our values and our natures that it cannot be understood or explained. You have committed an abomination." **[tinyurl.com/madoff18]**

Bradley Burston writes in Ha'aretz that Madoff "has managed to harm contemporary Jewry in ways anti-Semites could only dream about." **[tinyurl.com/madoff10]** In fact, the Anti-Defamation League says that hateful comments have been appearing on popular newspaper sites, blogs and message boards on the Internet. The ADL has reprinted a handful of them on its website, including this user comment, which appeared in the Palm Beach Post website: "Just another jew money changer thief. It's been happening for 3,000 years. Trust a jew and this is what will happen. History has proven it over and over and over. Jews have only one god – money." **[tinyurl.com/madoff16]**

Andrew Silow-Carroll, editor-in-chief of the New Jersey Jewish News, warns about wasting a lot of communal energy "if we spend much time worrying what they think." Rather, Jewish leaders "should take a long, hard look at the overlapping, and even redundant, agencies and projects in Jewish life" and they "should be grateful for the generosity of the very wealthy, but without allowing the *machers'* riches to place them above scrutiny." **[tinyurl.com/madoff15]**

The Madoff scandal is changing daily. To follow the story, I recommend checking out Forward.com and ejewishphilanthropy.com, along with the New York Times Topic devoted to Madoff. **[tinyurl.com/madoff08]** Forward.com has published a list tallying Jewish communal losses **[tinyurl.com/madoff07]** and the Wall Street Journal has been updating its list of all investors. **[tinyurl.com/madoff09]**

Although he has suffered no direct losses, I came upon one other person whose life has been changed by the scandal: Chicago lawyer Ari "no-relation-to-Bernard" Madoff. "My wife and I are expecting our first kid in March. So my wife sits up at night reading the baby name book, thinking of what would be the most appropriate first name for our coming child," he said on National Public Radio. "At the same time, I'm toiling over what would be the best last name to pick for our coming young one." **[tinyurl.com/madoff02]**

Actually, Ari Madoff *is* related to a Bernard Madoff – his 94-year-old zaide who lives in a Windsor, Ont., nursing home. So the grandson has elongated his introduction to "Ari no-relation-to-the-Bernard Madoff you're about to ask me about."

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

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His devotion and support to the Jewish Community
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will always be remembered

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Israelis urged to join media war

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Israel's Consul General in Toronto, Amir Gissin, is calling on the expatriate Israeli community to join in the local front in the ongoing war with Hamas.

Gissin said local Israelis should participate in the media and public relations war that is underway in Canada. It's not sufficient to have their hearts and minds linked to events and people in Israel, he said. They must join the local Jewish community in making Israel's case to Canadians.

Amir Gissin

"It's time for members of the Israeli community who support Israel to be more active and get engaged in what the Jewish community is doing, to take a leadership role," he said.

"There is a war we all cannot attend… This a war going on that is becoming more and more important in the media – the war for public opinion. That is where we can be effective, especially since the media is becoming a two-way communication."

Gissin made his pitch at a special information meeting organized by the Association for Soldiers in Israel – Canada (ASI), a support group that "funds social, spiritual and recreational programs and facilities to ease the burden faced by young soldiers."

He expanded on his remarks in an interview with The CJN.

Gissin, who was instrumental in launching a program to re-brand Israel, said contemporary media has become a two-way street, in which consumers "talk back and make their voice heard." He urged Israelis to write letters to the editor about reportage from Gaza and to respond on Internet comment pages when they want to correct the record.

"It was a call for them to use the Internet and mailing lists, and talk to friends and get them involved, too," he said. "We are not in a position to tell people what to say or what to do. We are in a position of encouragement."

Gissin said the Canadian media has, by and large, been fair in its treatment of the current conflict. In fact, he continued, the overarching narrative of the conflict has departed from past descriptions of Israel's fights with its enemies. This time, the media recognize that "Israel is fighting Hamas, not the Palestinian population. It also sees clearly that Hamas is acting as the proxy of Iran. People do understand. There is an organ outside the Middle East that is trying to destabilize the immediate arena."

Hamas unilaterally ended a ceasefire and started firing 40, 50 and 80 missiles a day, and despite "pictures that are difficult" from Gaza, Canadians know who is responsible for the violence, he said.

Nir Sela, managing director of ASI Canada, said the information meeting, attended by about 200 people at the Bernard Betel Centre, also served as a fundraiser, with $30,000 raised that night. That money was bundled with funds raised earlier plus other donations in a package of "a few hundred thousand dollars" that was sent to Israel to support soldiers during the Gaza operation.

The money is going to an emergency campaign to provide various types of recreational and respite facilities for soldiers. ASI in Israel operates several large tents near Gaza in which off-duty soldiers can watch TV, surf the Internet, eat a meal, do laundry, mail letters and play games. Soldiers receive food packages twice a week, and ASI provides volunteer drivers who bring soldiers home on leave. The organization also operates other stand-alone facilities across the country as a sort of home away from home for off-duty soldiers.

ASI volunteers assist wounded soldiers in hospital with non-medical needs, such as arranging TVs, phones and Internet service for their rooms. Families visiting wounded soldiers are housed in small motel-like buildings near the hospitals.

The ASI supports "soldiers spiritual needs. We boost their morale," Sela said. "We need to always tell them what they are doing is right."

YIDDISH CORNER

Edited by: ALEK SILVER

ייִדיש־ווינקל

רעדאגירט פון: אַלעק סילווער

דאָס נייַע יאָר 2009 איז דאָ

פון אַלעק סילווער

(סוף פון פריערדיקן „ווינקל")

עס זיינען געווען גאָראָרן קאָנפערענצן פון לענדער אין פינאַנציעלע עקספערטן צו נעפּינען מיטלען צו קאַנען באַלאַנסירן די אויסגאַבן פון מדינות אין איינוויינער צו קענען אָנגיין מיט זיערע לעבנס. מענטשן האָבן נישט געקענט קריגן אָדער פאַרקויפן הייזער אָן נעבליבן שטעקן מיט זיערע מאָרטגעדזשס. נישט נעוואָנן אפילו נגנוב נעלט צו קויפן טאָג־טעגלעכע נויטוועניקייטן. האָבן נעשעפטן זיך נעשלאָסן אָן נאָך אַרבעטער זיינען אָפּגעלייגט געוואָרן פון זייערע אַרבעטס־פלעצער. איז וויידער נעוואָרן ווייניקער נעלט צו קענען אויסלייַן די גרויסע פאַבריקאַנטן נישט צו גיין באַנקראָט.

וועג די וואָרטער וואָרן געשריבן זיינען דאָ רייד וועגן רעגירונגען אין אַמעריקע, קאַנאַדע אָן אַנדערע לענדער צו נעבן בילאַיאָן־דאָלאַרדיקע הלוואות צו די אויטאָ־אינדוסטריעס אָן בענק, כדי אָנצוהאַלטן דעם טעגלעכן פּראָצעס־פלוס אָן אַזוי אָרום העלפן דעם מענטש פון דער נאָס צו קענען אָנגיין.

די צוויי־טע גרויסע קאָנסטרוקציע איז געווען אין נאָוועמבער — די שוידערלעכע טעראָר־אַקציע אין מומבאַי, אינדיע. אַ בית־אינ אומבאַקאַנטע טעראָר־גרופּע — מעגלעך אַ צווייג פון דער „אַל קיידאַ" — האָט פאַרשפּרייט טויט אָן צעשטערונג אין דער שטאָט אָן דאָס האָט אריפגערודערט דאָס לאַנד אינדיע אָן די נאָנצע וועלט.

לויט די לעצטע ציפערן זיינען אומגעקומען איבער 170 קרבנות אָן צווייַ גרויסע האָטעלן זיינען צעשטערט געוואָרן אין פּיינרן. פאַר דעם יידישן פּאָלק איבער דער וועלט איז עס געווען אַ ספּעציעל שוידערלעכע אינערלעכנס. צוזיין די בינים, וואָס זיינען אָנגעגריפן געוואָרן פון די טעראָריסטן איז געווען אַ יידישע אינסטיטוציע אָרן עס זיינען דאָרט געפאַלן אַ צאָל יידישע קרבנות. צוזיין זיי איז דערמאָרדעט געוואָרן דער ייִנגער חב"ד־רבי, גבריאל האָלצבערג, אָן זיין פרוי רבקה. דאָס האָט געבראַכט גרויסן טרויער צום יידישן פּאָלק בכלל אָן צו דער חב"ד־באָוועגונג בפרט.

ביז אינט איז נאָך נישט באַוואוסט ווער עס זיינען געווען די מערדערס. לויט געוויסער אינפאָרמאַציע וועלט אַז אינדיע באַשולדיקט פּאָקיסטאַן אין דער דאָזיקער טעראָר־אקציע. אָבער דערווייל איז נאָך נאָרנישט באַוויזן געוואָרן.

אין די וואָלן ביי אונדז אין קאַנאַדע זיינען קיין גרויסע ענדערונגען נישט פאָרגעקומען. דער פּרעמיער מיניסטער סטעפאַן האַרפּער פון דער קאָנסערוואַטיווער פּאַרטיי איז ווידער דערוויילט געוואָרן. דאָס מאָל מיט אַ אַ גרעסערער צאָל דעלעגאַטן, אָבער נאָך אַלץ נישט באַקומען קיין מערהייט אין פּאַרלאַמענט, וואָס זאָל אים דערלויבן צו רעגירן לויט זיין ווילן, אָן אַ כוראַ, אַז די אָפּאָזיציע פּאַרטיין זאָלן אים נידער שטימען אין בריענגען דאָס לאַנד צו נייַע וואָלן.

די שוועריקייטן ביים צוזאַמענשטעלן די „ווינקלען" איז דאָס וואָס זיי מרוץ וועלן נעשריבן מיט וואָכן פריער אין אַרייַנגעבן אין דער רעדאַקציע, כדי זיי זאָלן גרייט פאַר דער באַשטימטער דאַטע. וועג די וועלן נעשריבן איז דאָ אַ פּאָליטישער קריזיס אין לאַנד. דער פּאַרלאַמענט איז נעשלאָסן אויף עטלעכע חדשים. וואָס עס וועט נעשען נאָך דעם קענען מיר איצט נישט זאָגן, וויייל מיר ווייסן נישט. עס איז נאָכּנישט מעגלעך, אַז אַ קאָאַליציע פון די אַנדערע דריי פּאַרטייַן זאָל איבער־נעמען דאָס רעגירן מיטן לאַנד. עס זיינען אויך מעגלעך נייַע וואָלן. נו, מיר וועלן זען.

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Downturn postpones new Edmonton JCC

By IRENA KARSHENBAUM
Special to The CJN

EDMONTON — Plans to build a new Jewish community centre in the Alberta capital have been postponed after collapsing real estate values derailed the local federation's intention to sell the current JCC to finance the initiative.

The community of about 5,200 had hoped to build the new JCC on land available next to Edmonton's Talmud Torah elementary school, and the project also received a personal $11-million guarantee from Edmonton philanthropist Irv Kipnes, as well as his commitment to volunteer to work on the project.

The decision to sell the old JCC and use the proceeds to build the new one in another location passed by a 163-69 vote in August 2007.

Clyde Hurtig

"We're quite lucky that we didn't spend a lot of money to this point," said Clyde Hurtig, president of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton. But he added that a lot of volunteer hours and energy have already gone into the project, and the community invested considerable resources on a rezoning application with the city to get ready to sell the current JCC's land. That process took eight months, as there was a large backlog of development applications at the time due to the city's then-building boom.

Rezoned lots on the old JCC site were put up for sale last summer, and the advertising was ready to be printed when suddenly, Hurtig said, "The market had gone soft, and then practically overnight in September the market fell apart. In the meantime the cost of construction soared, and we're unable to raise the money."

Edmonton currently has many construction projects that are in the process of being built, so labour and material costs are still high, while on the flip side, the housing market has collapsed.

Hurtig said that his executive decided not to do a capital fundraising campaign because "we felt the community wouldn't support a general campaign for a building."

Fortunately, the JCC had not been demolished, except for a few old tennis courts that were no longer being used, and no sale agreements had been reached, Hurtig said.

The community also ran into other problems. The JCC property, which overlooks the Edmonton River Valley, lost about one-third of its value during the rezoning process when some of the land was identified as being at risk of falling into the river.

"The rezoning of the land resulted in a reduced number of saleable lots on the site, as city planners required a significant 'set back' from the ravine… This reduced the original projected revenue," Hurtig said in a letter to the community posted on the federation's website.

"However, acting in good faith I believed, and still believe that the project could have been a success if the housing market had not collapsed," Hurtig added

A further difficulty came when the architectural plans for the new 35,000-square-foot facility – which was to contain a daycare, a kosher restaurant, fitness facilities, a seniors residence and community offices – came in and the budget figures were almost double of what was originally anticipated.

"All of this is very frustrating and very disappointing. I've spent hundreds of hours working on this," Hurtig said. "We've got the painting hanging at the JCC of what the development would look like. The problem is no one is coming forward to make an offer on the land."

In the meantime, the community isn't giving up.

"We're still looking at doing something," Hurtig said. "Depending on how things go, maybe we'll be able to renovate the current facility, or build a new facility."

He added: "All of this is still being worked on. Unfortunately, it can't be done overnight. All of this is done by volunteers and the JCC staff."

Hurtig said he's hopeful that "maybe things will turn around."

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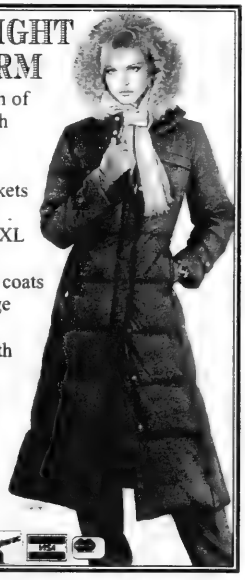

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$1 million earmarked for Red Cross

Continued from page 3

According to CIDA, the other $1 million is being earmarked for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which CIDA said "has an established presence in the region" that helps with food and water distribution as well as sanitation services.

CIDA added that none of the funding will go to Hamas, which Ottawa considers a terrorist organization, but that it stood ready to inject more financial support, if necessary, as the humanitarian situation in Gaza develops.

Calls by The CJN to the agency were not returned by deadline.

"The conditions in Gaza are very concerning," Cannon said. "Canada urges all efforts to allow safe and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance."

Cannon also commended Israel's Jan. 6 decision to "facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance through a temporary ceasefire" in which the Israel Defence Forces started allowing a daily three-hour window for relief workers to move aid into Gaza.

Hamas has used these pockets of calm to fire more rockets at Israel.

Speaking to reporters on Parliament Hill after the announcement last week, Cannon answered questions about Canada's position on "the proportionality" of Israel's response to Hamas' years of rocket attacks on the Jewish state's southern cities, saying that Israel "is allowed to defend itself and… it defended itself. While recognizing that, and asking Hamas to cease its rocket attacks, we need an immediate ceasefire that is going to be durable and have two states living side by side, in peace, living democratically."

Moshe Ronen, chair of the Canada-Israel Committee, told The CJN his organization welcomed the government's efforts on behalf of the Palestinian people as part of an international endeavour to address humanitarian needs.

"That said, the [committee] has cautioned the government that it must ensure that the assistance is not hijacked by Hamas or diverted to support Hamas operatives at the expense of the civilian population for whom it was intended," Ronen said.

"As always, Canadian aid must be accompanied by a protocol that ensures transparency and accountability so that Canada can be certain the assistance reached the intended population."

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Protesters enter Montreal consulate

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — About 15 anti-Israel protesters made their way up to the sixth-floor offices of the Israeli consulate in the Westmount Square office tower in Montreal the morning of Jan. 8, a day after a similar incident occurred in Toronto.

The Montreal women held a noisy demonstration in the hallway until police arrived about an hour later and asked them to leave, consulate spokesperson Peter Subissati said.

He said they didn't appear to try to enter the heavily secured consulate. They left without resistance when the police told them to go and continued their demonstration outside Westmount Square.

No damage was done and there were no arrests.

Subissati said the protesters, the majority of whom appeared to him to be women, arrived before 9 a.m. There were only four staff in the consulate at the time. No one from the consulate engaged with them verbally, he said.

The protesters carried placards and megaphones and unfurled a large banner with the name of the incident's organizer, Tadamon (solidarity in Arabic). The group was the main organizer of the large Jan. 4 rally in Montreal and other demonstrations against Israel's actions in Gaza.

Tadamon said its goal was to serve the consulate with an "eviction notice" for "war crimes under the fourth Geneva convention" in Gaza.

Subissati said the incident "came as a surprise," even though a similar event had occurred in Toronto the day before, when eight Jewish women, including prominent activist Judy Rebick, were arrested and later released after they entered the Israeli consulate and began protesting Israel's actions in Gaza.

חדשה בקנדה

נינה שנהב

"תבואי אלי לפגישה מחר, כאילו את באה לראיון עבודה." יעצת לי סאלי, יועצת התעסוקה הדינמית שלי, אותה אתם כבר מכירים מהטורים הקודמים. "אנחנו צריכות להכין אותך לראיון. לראות אם את עוברת מסך." מוסיפה, כדי שהשחקנית שבי תתלהב (אין מה לומר, היא כבר הצליחה להבין טיפה מי אני).

"מה לובשים לראיון, כדי להתקבל לעבודה?" אני שואלת את מאיר בבית. מאיר מכין חביתות, ולא עונה. "נו?" אני שואלת שוב. "אם הייתי יודע איך עוברים ראיון עבודה, הייתי עובד היום, לא?!" הוא עונה בחמיצות. אני בורחת לחדר השינה.

אני מנזרת כמה בגדים על המיטה, ושמחה לגלות שהם מאפיינים אותי: הם צבעוניים, בוהמיינים וסמרטוטיים למדי, כיאה לאומנית שאני.

למחרת, השקם בבוקר, סאלי סוקרת במבט ארוך את מכנסי הטרנינג הסגולים ההדוקים (כבר אמרתי לכם שעליתי בקנדה עשרים קילו! נשבעת. האוכל פה הרבה יותר טעים, אבל על זה כתבה אחרת. מבטיחה) ואת הסווצ'ר הסגול נמוח עם הליצנים העליזים. סאלי משתעלת המון זמן. "אולי נסטה בפעם הבאה להיות פחות שמחים?" היא מעבירה על הליצנים שלי. "וקצת יותר מחוייטים?" תוך כדי הצבעה על מכנסי הטרנינג המאוהנרים ריגשית (שנייה לפני התפוצצות). אני מסכימה בלב שלם. להיות פחות שמחים. טיפ נפלא ואופטימי למובטלים שבחבורה.

סאלי שואלת אותי על ניסיוני התעסוקתי. אני מספרת לה בהרחבה ותוך כדי ציחקוקים רבים, על ניסיוני העשיר בעורכת מגזינים, שחקנית תיאטרון פעילה וציירת. בכל פעם שאני נכנסת לאנקדוטה מעניינת, שוב סאלי מתחילה עם השיעול שלה, עד שלבסוף אני שולפת סוכריית מציצה, שמרגיעה אותה מעט.

כשאני מסיימת לספר לה על עצמי, אנחנו מזמינות סנדוויצ'ים לארוחת צהריים. בתום הארוחה, ממוירסת, אני מקשיבה להערות שלה.

"ישנם דברים שאת לא מוכרחה לדווח עליהם." היא פותחת. "לדוגמה, הסיטואציה ההיא, בה החלטת להמריד את כל עובדי העיתון בו כתבת לשביתה, בגלל שהעורכת הלשונית אמרה לך במעלית שהתפטרת שלך לא הצליחה. או אפילו המקרה המצער בו דחפת את השחקנית הראשית מכל המדרגות ושברת לה את היד, כדי שהיא תהיה אותנטית יותר בתפקיד הטרגי המתבקש."

אני לא בטוחה שסאלי צודקת, אבל אני ממשיכה להקשיב. "לא כדאי גם שתדברי יותר מדי על הדבאון היצירתי שלך, אשר גרם לך לנשת למנהל הגלריה בה הצגת את ציוריך, ולאיים עליו לתספרי לאישתו שהוא בוגד בה עם העוזר שלו. את מבינה, זה לא בדיוק מה שנחוץ לבוס הפוטנציאלי שלך לדעת."

אני מקשיבה, מהורהרת.

"בקיצור," קמה סאלי ממקומה, "אל תהיי שתוללנית וססגונית. את הרי שחקנית, נכון? תשחקי תפקיד. תכנסי לנעליים של דמות סגורה, אפרורית, שקטה, נימוסית, לא פטפטנית (מבט מתרה) אדיבה, וקנדית."

אנחנו נפרדות בלחיצת יד רפה. "והעיקר," קוראת אחרי סאלי בעליצות, "חיוך על הפנים! תהיי אופטימית!"

בבית אני מספרת הכל למאיר. "את צריכה לפחות לנסות." הוא מניב לבסוף. "היא הרי יועצת תעסוקה, היא כנראה יודעת על מה היא מדברת, לא?"

אני מתאמנת על להיות אפרורית מספר ימים, עד שאני מחמנת לראיון עבודה (עזרת למוכרת בחנות גרביים, אם זה כל כך מעניין אתכם).

אני נחפת לחליפה שחורה, חובשת כובע צמר אפור (שמסתיר את הפס הכחול והחינני שהוספתי לשיער הקצוץ הבלונדיני-אדום שלי), וניגשת להתראיין אצל ג'ניפר, הבוסית במוטנציה שלי. אני בשום אופן לא מספרת לה על מנהל הגלריה, לא על מרד העיתונאים הגדול, ואפילו לא על היד השבורה של השחקנית הראשית. אני סתם אחת, נינה אחת, בלי שום סירוף, שום ניצוץ. מוכרת גרביים.

בתום הראיון, ג'ניפר מתבוננת בי ממרום שנותיה וקומתה (סיונית מתוקה וקומפקטית בת 22), ומחייכה לי בצער שהמשרה לא מתאימה לי.

"אולי תנסי לעבוד במעבדה, או במחסן ספרותי! העיקר לא עם לקוחות ישירים." היא מציעה לי בצער, כשהיא מלווה אותי החוצה. "אין לך כנראה כישורים חברותיים. את משוגעת מדי, מופנמת."

אני מהנהנת בכובד ראש, ונפרדת ממנה.

אני אפילו לא מספרת למאיר שלא התקבלתי. כזו אני. טיפוס סגור...

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Coast to Coast

Funding problems arise in JNF-Manitoba project

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Despite an apparent 2006 pledge to do so, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) has yet to to raise substantial funds for a research partnership formed that year between it and the province of Manitoba.

The province committed $1 million, to be paid over a three-year period starting in 2006, to the partnership with the Israeli environmental organization. So far, $700,000 of that money has been invested with the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba in an endowment fund.

The partnership will fund research in agriculture and water conservation and usage, part of growing co-operation between JNF and the province in these areas.

The program for JNF Prairie region's JNF Negev Gala Concert, honouring Premier Gary Doer, stated: "The province recently announced a commitment of $1 million in support of the fund, with the JNF targeting to match that amount through fundraising."

However, in the 2006 memo of understanding between the JNF and the province, the JNF doesn't make any commitment to raise a specific amount of money for the partnership endowment fund.

Erez Rotem, current JNF director for the prairie region, told The CJN that the "JNF encourages and will encourage its supporters to donate to the partnership endowment fund." However, he acknowledged that there hasn't been any specific fundraising drive for for the partnership endowment, and minimal money has been raised so far.

In a telephone interview, Rami Kleinmann, the former national director of the JNF, said that the statement in the 2006 gala concert program was made in good faith in "an advertisement brochure," in which the JNF gave an "ideal amount" it would have liked to have been able to raise.

Kleinmann said that, unfortunately, after the concert was held in June 2006, the Second Lebanon War broke out the next month.

The war caught everyone off guard and changed the focus of JNF's fundraising, he said, because the organization had to raise "emergency funds" to assist the Israeli home front.

"When the war broke out, the [fundraising] focus changed and the 2006-2007 campaign was directed toward re-foresting the north of Israel, which had been badly damaged by the war," Kleinmann said.

For most of 2008, after Kleinmann left the JNF, there was no shaliach in the Winnipeg office until Rotem arrived this past August.

Kleinmann, who is now executive director of Canadian Friends of Hebrew University, said that the relationship with the province is "precious" and fundraising requires "a lot of patience."

In 2007, the JNF paid for the costs of taking a First Nations delegation from Grand Rapids, Man., to Israel to look into advancing a greenhouse project on a reserve and other initiatives using Israeli technology.

Kleinmann added that he believes the JNF will be able to raise money for the partnership endowment fund once there is "a tangible project," around which to build a fundraising campaign.

He said fundraising would be more successful once the community can see the kinds of research projects the endowment fund can support.

Both Kleinmann and Rotem noted that in the upcoming year, the JNF will be raising money for the Manitoba-Israel Water Symposium, slated to take place later this year in Israel. The first such symposium took place in Winnipeg this past August.

Kleinmann added that once there have been two water symposiums, which give potential donors an idea of the kind of scientific collaboration that the partnership endowment fund can support, then "it will be possible [for the JNF] to campaign to raise funds for this fund."

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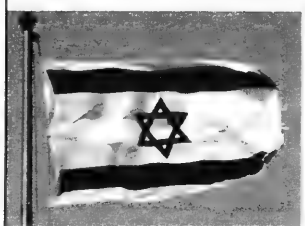
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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Heroic attempt to save Hungarian Jews inspires filmmaker

By CLARE HILL
Special to The CJN

Immediately after filming ended for the Ryerson short film about the Holocaust, So Soon Forgotten, the extras on the set made a point of thanking writer and director Zack Bernbaum for the experience.

The fourth-year film student was told how much being a part of this re-creation of history meant to them and how they would go home and do more research into this time period. Getting reactions like that meant a great deal to Bernbaum.

"It seems like you're doing something right," he said.

Bernbaum's 15-minute short film was inspired by the true story of Otto Teibeth, a Polish Jew who disguised himself as an SS officer in an attempt to stop a trainful of Hungarian Jews from being deported to Auschwitz. Bernbaum's story focuses on one group out of the 400,000 that were deported.

"The smaller stories are not always brought to the forefront," Bernbaum says.

This is Bernbaum's thesis project at Ryerson, which is set to be completed this month, but his plans for the film extend far beyond the classroom.

Along with fellow student and producer of the film, Josh Clavir, Bernbaum plans to submit the movie to all the major film festivals, including Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Munich and the Toronto international film festivals.

"It's basically a calling card for what we can do at this stage. It shows what we can maybe do better... but maybe not bigger," he says, laughing.

Armed with more than $30,000 in budget, Bernbaum is going big with this project. As filming was done with a 35-millimetre camera, the movie will have a high-quality finish.

The sets include a built-to-scale replica of a section of Auschwitz, which Bernbaum visited last spring and took pictures of with his potential film set in mind.

The use of a 1940s South Simcoe Railway steam engine train, as well as costumes flown in from Vancouver and a 10-piece string orchestra for the scoring of the film, all gives the movie high production values.

Bernbaum feels extremely lucky to have garnered such a quick and enthusiastic response when he pitched the project to a number of sponsors last February.

Zack Bernbaum, right, said he wanted to create a film that would bring smaller Holocaust stories to the forefront.

The funding has enabled Bernbaum to bring to life those scenes that he envisioned when he first began writing the script. He had his work translated into German by a friend who is a screenwriting student at the Filmakademie in Baden-Württemberg.

"I think it was a good choice to have it in German," Bernbaum says. "It really lends itself to authenticity and makes it stand out [from other films]."

The fact that the seven-day shoot ran smoothly sets it apart from other student productions, as well.

"We never hit the student 18-hour day," Bernbaum says. "We got it done in a realistic time frame that didn't push the crew to mutiny and not having fun."

But producing the film was not without its challenges.

"There were some great obstacles, too," says Clavir. "We were working with 85 extras."

One of their main jobs was to rally the extras and keep them organized, which was often difficult with little children involved.

Some of the extras included Bernbaum and Clavir's own family members and friends. Bernbaum's father, Ron; his mother, Renee; and his sister, Rebecca, were there, as well as Clavir's father, Barry. All were struck by the importance of the story of Teibeth, which Bernbaum came across when researching the time period.

This is not the first film in which Bernbaum has documented the Holocaust. In his second year of university, he made a documentary about the experiences of his grandmother, who survived the labour camp Grünberg and the ensuing death march.

The documentary, titled Helen, premièred at the Chicago International Reel Shorts Festival.

Recreating Teibeth's story in So Soon Forgotten struck a chord with everyone on set.

"The emotions really came through even in the background shots because people were experiencing a part of what if would have been like," Bernbaum said.

"It was interesting to see my family kind of relive that event," he says.

Filming the movie was an odd experience, because half his mind was devoted to being in the moment and watching the story unfold and the other half was turned to actually directing the movie, he says.

There is one particular shot that will always stay with Bernbaum and Clavir. It's a scene in which a group has escaped from the train on which they would have been deported and are running through a wheat field.

The camera starts filming low to the ground and slowly pulls up to a great height, revealing the vast expanse of the field and the people running for freedom.

"It's very poetic and something I was really going for in style," Bernbaum said.

"When I wrote the script and visualized it, this is how I was wanting it to look."

Bernbaum said he used as many as 85 extras, some of whom are shown being loaded into a train car, for his film.

Canadian teens head to DC for USY convention

Compiled by CJN Staff

More than 1,100 teenage members and advisers of United Synagogue Youth gathered at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C., late last month for the 58th annual USY International Convention.

USY is the high school affiliate of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

Among the attendees were 26 eastern Canadian region USYer's from Hamilton, Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto. During the convention, which took place Dec. 21 to 25, participants explored the educational theme of Israel at 60 in workshops, informal classes and group activities.

One of the convention's speakers was Cory Schneider, president of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, who received the USY Alumni Award.

Eric Lynn, the top staffer on Jewish affairs for U.S. president-elect Barack Obama's campaign, addressed the teens about the importance of Israel advocacy.

Mazi Melesa, of the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry, also addressed the convention, as part of the induction ceremony for USY's Abraham Joshua Heschel Honor Society.

"Throughout the past 58 years, USY has provided a positive forum for social, educational and religious programming for thousands of teens," said Jules Gutin, USY director. "The annual USY International Convention allows nearly 1,000 teenagers at once to share experiences and learn from each other about both the current events of today as well as the events that have shaped the Jewish people.

"Having the educational theme focus on Israel allowed our teenagers to explore a topic which is relevant and evolving, yet was explored in Judaic texts centuries ago."

Participants spent time on Tuesday, Dec. 23, volunteering with Bears from Bergenfield, a New Jersey-based organization that collects new and gently used stuffed animals and sends them to Israel to comfort children affected by terror.

Convention director Karen Stein said that "part of our objective is to teach the Jewish values of gemilut chasadim, performing acts of loving-kindness for others, and tikkun olam, literally, repairing the world.

"It is also nice to make a positive impact on the community while teaching our youth the importance of helping others, regardless of their faith or race," she added.

In addition to activities related to the convention theme of Israel at 60, there were leadership workshops and committee meetings dealing with political action programming, chapter and regional communications and social action programming.

Convention delegates elected officers to the 2009 USY International executive board. David Helfand of Leawood, Kan., was elected to the office of president, succeeding Adam Berman of Bexley, Ohio. Maxwell Marmer, of Shaar Shalom Synagogue in Thornhill, Ont., was elected to serve as the international communication vice-president.

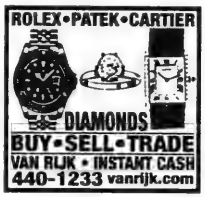
Marmer's region, Eastern Canadian Region United Synagogue Youth, won an award for raising the most money per capita for SATO (Social Action/Tikkun Olam).

"It's hard to name just one or two highlights," said Stein. "The whole convention has such a positive energy that comes from all the experiences, ideas and activities.

"The impact can last for months, even after the convention is over. When USYers go back to their regions and chapters, they give a real boost to the level of programming and involvement in USY."

In keeping with its commitment to outreach, USY holds the convention in a different city each year. In December 2009, the convention will be in Chicago.

Eastern Canadian Region USYers join over 1,000 teens in Washington for annual international convention.



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Maya Iber surveys the damage caused to her Sderot home by Gaza rocket fire.

Photo courtesy of Eli Israel

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Montreal rally stresses morality of Israel's cause

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Cries in Arabic for the deaths of Jews heard during the Jan. 4 anti-Israel demonstration through the streets of downtown Montreal show what the conflict between Israel and Hamas is truly about, Rabbi Reuven Poupko told the community rally in support of Israel in Montreal last week.

"We know what this means, we've heard it before. It's not about Israel or its policies, it's about the Jewish people. Our very existence is a provocation to Hamas and its supporters."

Without being specific, Rabbi Poupko expressed a sense of betrayal over human rights defenders who have found common cause with Hamas and denounce "the only bastion" in the Middle East of the principles they claim to cherish.

A standing-room only audience of about 1,000 people attended the rally, held at Rabbi Poupko's Congregation Beth Israel Beth Aaron. The crowd frequently waved Canadian, Quebec and Israeli flags and broke into spontaneous singing of Hebrew songs and chants of "Am Yisrael chai."

They watched a live feed from the Negev city of Be'er Sheva, which is now within range of the Hamas missiles.

Israeli Consul General Yoram Elron received a standing ovation after declaring that "enough is enough" of Hamas' shelling of southern Israel thousands of times over the past eight years.

"Critics speak of a lack of proportionality in Israel's response, but the question is which other nation would show so much restraint?"

He vowed that Israel will continue to fight until its citizens can live in peace.

Rabbi Poupko delivered a fiery address, his voice breaking at times. He castigated Hamas for using children, women and the elderly as "human shields" against Israeli fire. The Israel Defence Forces do all they can to avoid civilian casualties, yet the army continues to be "libelled" by CNN, the BBC and other media, he said.

"Too many Israelis are in their graves today because we were more concerned about their kids than they are," he said.

"Peace will come the day Palestinian leaders care about their own children as much as we do about them," he charged, dismissing the "crocodile tears" over Palestinian civilian deaths as cynical. He also deplored what he views as the silence from the world when "Muslims kill Muslims" in Sudan, Somalia and Iraq, and Russia killed "tens of thousands" of Muslims in Chechnya.

"The explanation is that the loss of Muslim life will only be protested when they can point an accusatory finger at Israel."

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz, who co-chairs the Canada-Israel Committee's Canadian Rabbinic Caucus with Rabbi Poupko, also charged that Israel is being libelled. Charges that its army disregards Palestinian civilian lives is "the modern-day equivalent of the blood libel," he said.

He pledged the community's unwavering support. "Israel is our home, our heart, our hope, and we will be there for Israel no matter what."

Mount Royal Liberal MP Irwin Cotler sent a message from Jerusalem accusing Hamas of war crimes and a "genocidal objective in the deliberate targeting" of Israeli civilians. He said using Palestinian civilians as "human shields" when it launches missiles at Israel also constitutes a war crime. Fellow Liberal, Marlene Jennings, MP for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine and deputy house leader, attended the rally.

The New Democratic Party (NDP) was criticized by Federation CJA president Marc Gold for its position on the conflict between Israel and Hamas, and he suggested a split exists within the party.

"We do have friends in the NDP and they are as sick at heart as we are with the leadership of that party," Gold said.

In contrast, Gold said the Harper government has remained steadfast in its support of Israel in this current crisis, and the Liberals and even the Bloc Québécois have shown an understanding of Israel's actions. Gold urged community members to write to supportive politicians to thank them. He said the Quebec media, overall, have also been more understanding of Israel in this conflict than in the past and should receive due praise.

Winnipeggers back Israel

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Some 550 people attended a "Stand with Israel" rally Jan. 8 at Winnipeg's Asper Community Campus, and they were joined by a number of federal and provincial cabinet ministers and politicians.

"[Ever since the creation of the state], the people of Israel have been forced to defend themselves on a daily basis," said provincial NDP Justice Minister David Chomiak.

"The enemy and the fear are [Hamas] terrorists who know no limits," he added.

Joy Smith, the Conservative MP for Kildonan-St. Paul, who flew in from Ottawa for the event, noted that Hamas is listed as a terror group under federal law

"Canada maintains that Hamas rocket attacks are the cause of this crisis," she said.

"The tragic truth is that civilian deaths will continue until Hamas abandons the policy of terror or until someone takes away its ability to wage war against the civilian population," Jonathan Kroft, president of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, told the audience.

Anita Neville, Liberal MP for Winnipeg South Centre, told the rally: "In 2005, Israel unilaterally withdrew every Israeli soldier and 8,000 civilians from the Gaza Strip. The current situation is, therefore, not about occupation… It is about Hamas' pursuit of their declared aim to destroy Israel."

She added: "Despite the graphic images in the media, we know that Israel's intent is to target terrorists and spare civilians."

Neville quoted Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff, who said Jan. 8, "Hamas is to blame for organizing, instigating these rocket attacks, and then for sheltering among civilian populations. And Israel is justified in continuing military operations."

She also noted that Ignatieff said: "The rocket and mortar attacks must end and a permanent ceasefire should result."

Federal Treasury Board President Vic Toews received a standing ovation when he said: "Defence of Israel is not a political choice for our government, it is a moral imperative.

"We have also been clear that we believe Israel has a clear right to defend itself against the continued rocket attacks by Palestinian militant groups which have deliberately targeted civilians," he said. "Israel has the clear legal and moral right to defend its people," he added.

"Israeli and Palestinian leaders must remain committed to finding a comprehensive peace settlement. We remain supportive of the Middle East peace process… We offer our complete support to the parties in reaching their goal of a comprehensive two-state solution," Toews said.

He also noted that Canada has "called for the international community to come together to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation [in Gaza]."

Manitoba's minister of water stewardship, Christine Melnick, was also at the rally.

SINGLES EVENTS
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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Only paid Family Moments announcements can be guaranteed to appear in a specific issue, when received by deadline, 10 days prior to publication date. All other items will appear on a first-come, first-served basis, as space allows.

Mazel tov announcements featured on onlysimchas.com will appear as space permits.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Label the back of all photos and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. Please keep all announcements to 25 words, maximum.

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As featured on

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Mazel tov on the wedding of Lauren Dermer & Mark Singer.

Mazel tov on the recent engagement of Talya Adler & Daniel Gutenberg.

Mazel tov to Rachel Jacob & Daniel Raymond on their recent engagement.

Mazel tov on the wedding of Ilana Saltan & Golan Silverman.

Mazel tov on the recent engagement of Danielle Cherrick & David Bender.

Mazel tov on the birth of Yitzchak Isaac Goldberg.

Mazel tov to Shua & Zali (Nadoff) Bier on the birth of a baby boy.

Mazel tov on the graduation of Moriya Simcha Feldman.

Mazel tov on the recent bat mitzvah of Emilie Goldman.

Mazel tov on the birth of Elisha Badani.

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What's New deadlines: Monday, Jan. 19, is the deadline for the Jan. 29 issue and Monday, Jan. 26, is the deadline for the Feb. 5 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Thursday, Jan. 15

ABUSE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Torah in Motion presents "Keeping Our Children Safe: What Families and Communities Can Do," a panel discussion with **Rabbi Mark Dratch,** director of JSafe, The Jewish Institute Supporting an Abuse Free Environment; **Dr. Michelle Friedman**, chair of pastoral counselling at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah; **Judy Klitsner**, of Pardes Institute and a teenage victim of rabbinic abuse. 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. 416-633-5770 or www.torahinmotion.org

Friday, Jan. 16

BETH EMETH BABIES

The winter session of the play group begins today with a 10-week session of Jewish educational content, music and games, playtime and kosher snacks. Bring your 3-to 36-month-old child or grandchild. 10:30 a.m.-noon. $150, non-members $175. Register, 416-633-3838.

BEACHES ONEG SHABBAT

The Beach Synagogue hosts a potluck dinner followed by a musical service with **Susan Litchen** and **Karen Gold**. Bring a vegetarian dish or dessert and join the meal at 6:15 p.m. or join the service at 7:15 p.m. 109 Kenilworth Ave. www.beachsynagogue.com or 416-694-7942

Saturday, Jan. 17

B'NAI SHALOM SERVICES

Join B'Nai Shalom, a Conservative egalitarian congregation, for Shabbat service and kiddush. 10 a.m. in Oakville. For location, 905-901-9889 or www.bnaishalom.ca.

HUMOUR IN THE BIBLE

Temple Har Zion presents **Ray Havelock** with a program on humorous incidents, stories and personalities in the Bible. Bring a dairy dish for the potluck lunch. Interfaith couples welcome. Noon. 905-889-2252

PIZZA AND MOVIE NIGHT

Oraynu Congregation For Humanistic Judaism screens the film The Year My Parents Went on Vacation with pizza and latkes. 7:30 p.m. Non-members $15. 18 Wynford Dr. RSVP, Roby, 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org.

SMALL CHILDREN BIG PIC

Aish Toronto's Young Couples hosts "Small Children Big Picture: Issues and Strategies For Children Ages 2-5" with **Sarah Chana Radcliffe**. $20 includes sushi and dessert. Register and location, aishtoronto.com or 905-764-1818.

Sunday, Jan. 18

JEWISH HISTORY FILM

Kehillat Shaarei Torah presents a modern Jewish history film series, Sundays, Jan. 18, 25 and Feb. 1, screening Faith and Fate, a series exploring how events in history affected Jews and how Jews affected world history with **Rabbi David Aronson**. Refreshments 7 p.m. Film 7:30 p.m. $10/evening, $25/series. 416-229-2600, ext. 3

SPEEDDATING

Aish presents a quick and non-pressured way for Jewish singles to meet each other. Men 25-32, women 21-29. Register, **Aliza** 647-831-1590 or speeddating.com.

Monday, Jan. 19

RELIGION 101

Beth Emeth and Beth Tikvah Synagogues series on different religions with **Rabbi Wayne Allen**. Tonight, "The Anglican Church of Canada" at Beth Tikvah. 8 p.m. Non-members $5. 416-221-3433

Continued on page 25

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What's New

Continued from page 24

KABBALAH OF DREAMS

Rabbi Chaim Hildeshaim continues his discussion of dreams and what they mean at the Jewish Russian Community Centre. 8 p.m. Free, open to men and women. 416-222-7105, ext 224

Tuesday, Jan. 20

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY

Beth Tikvah Synagogue series with **Larry Anklewicz** continues with the film The Year My Parents Went on Vacation. 2 p.m. $5. 416-221-3433

BOOK REVIEW

The Adath Israel Book and Film Review series reviews Then We Came To The End by **Joshua Ferris**. 8 p.m. with **Heather Kassel**. $10, non-members $15. 416-635-5340

A WOMAN OF VALOUR

Beth Tikvah Sisterhood hosts "A Study of *Eshet Chayil*: A Woman of Valour" with **Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein**, a text study in English highlighting biblical women. Tonight and Jan. 27, 8 p.m. Non-members $5. 416-221-3433

Wednesday, Jan. 21

MAKING DIVORCE WORK

"Birthdays. Hockey Games and Holidays: Making It Work After Divorce," a lecture by the Jewish Family Institute and Jewish Family and Child. 8 p.m. at the Village Shul. $10. 416-785-1107

DIABETES CHAPTER

Dr. Jeffrey Perl discusses "Diabetes and Kidneys: The Sweet Truth," at the general meeting of the Jewish diabetes chapter. 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. $1. 416-363-0177, ext. 7403

POMEGRANATE GUILD

Stefanie Kepecs, a textile artist, demonstrates how to make three-dimensional flowers for Tu b'Shvat napkin holders. 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. info@pomegranateguild.ca.

Other News

REDECORATING

Daytime program at Temple Har Zion features interior decorator **Jean Grier** on "Downsizing, Re-sizing, and Redecorating on a Budget." Thursday, Jan. 22, 1 p.m. Non-members $5. Coffee, tea and cookies served.

CHASSIDIC MUSIC

Cantor Marshall Loomer presents "The History of Chassidic Music Through Song," providing insight and demonstrating niggunim of chassidic rabbis. Thursday, Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m. at Beth David Synagogue. Free. 416-633-5500

KOL AMI TRIVIA NIGHT

Temple Kol Ami is holding a trivia night event, Saturday, Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m. at the Leo Baeck Day School. $10. RSVP, 905-482-0445 or rlevenstein@rogers.com.

BENEFIT CONCERT

Soprano **Miriam Eskin** and pianist-arranger **Nina Shapilsky** perform a Yiddish and Broadway Cabaret Night to benefit the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir. Saturday, Jan. 24, 8 p.m. at the Winchevsky Centre. $25. 416-789-5502

2 B MARRIED

The Jewish Family Institute hosts a five-week seminar for engaged couples beginning Monday, Jan. 26, 8 p.m. at the Village Shul. $250/couple. 416-785-1107

WRESTLING WITH GOD

Join Mekorot for "Wrestling With God: The Challenge of the Holocaust" with **James Diamond**. Wednesdays, 8-9:30 p.m. Jan. 28-Feb. 25 at Or Chaim Yeshiva. Register, 416-8772050 or www.mekorot.ca.

MARKETING FOR SUCCESS

United Jewish Appeal, Israeli Division Business Cabinet, hosts "Strategies for Challenging Times: Understanding the Canadian Mosaic" with **Howard Lichtman**, with a dessert reception. Thursday, Jan. 29, 7 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building. $10 in advance, $20 at the door. RSVP, ggomperts@ujafed.org, www.ujaevents.com/registration/success or 416-631-5707.

KOLEL COURSES

Kolel's winter/spring brochure is available. Classes start the week of Feb. 2, at BJCC and Miles Nadal. 416-636-1880, ext. 235, or www.kolel.org

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child Service. 4600 Bathurst St. Information/registration, 416-638-7800, or www.jfandcs.com. Call **Shawna**, ext. 215, for info and registration.

How to Talk With Your Ex So You Get What You Need: A two-session workshop on effective communication, to better deal with an ex and issues of parenting and children. Tuesday, Jan. 20 and 27, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Promenade Mall, #313.

Marriage Preparation – Beyond The Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A six-session group for engaged couples marrying in the next year. Discuss changing roles, finances, sexuality, Jewish family values and communication/conflict resolution. Begins Monday, Jan. 26, at First Narayever Synagogue, 7:30-9 p.m.

Dating In Mid-life: A workshop for men and women 40+ looking for information on how to nurture a lasting relationship. Tuesday, Jan. 27, 7-9:30 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

When You're About to Separate – What to Tell The Kids: A workshop for parents about to separate or in the early stages of separation on how to best meet your child's needs including, when to tell the children and how to handle moving day. Tuesday, Jan. 27, 6:30-9 p.m. at Promenade Mall, #313.

FOR SENIORS

The Association of Jewish Seniors host **Steven Shulman** on "United Jewish Appeal and the Israel Connection" on Thursday, Jan. 15, at 1:30 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. To reserve, call **Tammy**, 416-635-2860.

Temple Sinai Social Club Lunch Programs hosts "An Afternoon with Friends," **Alex** and **Rita**, The Gold Band Singers, singing Hebrew, Yiddish, Spanish and Italian songs. Wednesday, Jan. 21, 12.30 p.m. $5, non members $7.

Active Seniors at Miles Nadal JCC hosts a drop-in recreation and socialization day with exercise, bagel nosh, board games and current events discussion. Thursday, Jan. 22, 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155 or phyllisf@mnjcc.org

Chai Shalom Social Club at Beth Emeth hosts a Winter Music Cabaret, world music with **Premek Kruta**. Sunday, Jan. 25, 1:30 p.m. $6, non-members $10. Reserve by Jan. 22, 416-736-8073, 416-458-1440 or 416-633-3838.

Earl Bales Seniors Club In The Park. Movie, Thursday, Jan. 15, 1 p.m. $2; Sunday dance, Jan. 25; Casino Rama, Wednesday, Feb. 11. Call Tuesday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112

Elder abuse lecture with **Naomi Kornfield** of Circle of Care, Tuesday, Jan. 20, 10 a.m. $3, non-members $6.

Winter festival with vendors, bazaar and entertainment. Wednesday, Jan. 21, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free.

WAGMAN CENTRE

55 Ameer Ave. 416-785-2500

The Columbus Centre Choir will perform in the assembly room on Sunday, Jan. 25, 2 p.m. $2.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca

Youth ages 13-16 interested in the Maccabi Games contact Grant, gsmith@bjcc.ca or ext. 257.

Red Cross babysitters course, Sunday, Jan. 18, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. $49. Register, ext. 235.

"My Hebrew Picnic": Share Hebrew with your newborn to 2 years old. Mondays, 10-10:45 a.m., begins Jan. 19 at the Jewish Discovery Museum.

Adult Hour @ the Family Place. Thursdays 10:30-11:30 a.m. Info and registration, ext. 235.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org

Hebrew-language courses, beginner, intermediate, conversation and grammar and Yiddish classes. $175, non-members $200. Info, ext. 154.

"Climate Change, Conflict and Peace in the Middle East" with **Stuart Schoenfeld**. Sunday, Jan. 18, 10-11:30 a.m. Info, joan@djcs.org or ext. 112.

Sundays on Bloor, music talk with **Jordan Klapman**, "Rock 'n' Roll Jews: **Doc Pomus** and **Mort Shuman**: Black, White, Blues and Rhythm" Sunday, Jan. 18, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. $9 per lecture, drop-in - includes a light breakfast. Register, ext. 0.

"Taibele and Her Demon," **Lorie Wolf**'s musical and visual adaptation of **Isaac Bashevis Singer**'s short story with **Marilyn Lerner**. Sunday, Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre. Tickets, $15, $20 at the door, students and seniors $15. 1-888-655-9090 or www.ticketpro.ca

Deb Filler performs in Well, I'll Tell Ya...! Thursday, Jan. 29, and Jan. 31, 8 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 1, 3 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre. $25. Tickets, ext. 0, or www.mnjcc.org.

Volunteers Needed

MEALS ON WHEELS

Volunteer drivers are urgently needed to deliver kosher meals on wheels to Jewish seniors. Help is especially needed over the winter months. Info, pedwards@circleofcare.com or 416-635-2860.

SHAPE LIVES OF TEENS

Help shape the lives of Jewish teens as a B'nai Brith Youth adviser. Develop leadership skills while bringing teens closer to their history and heritage. Contact 416-398-2004, ext. 222, or kgoodman@bbyo.org.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 22

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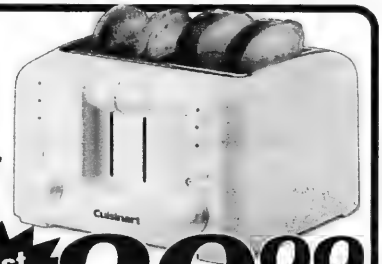

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BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Pearl Fruman	Dec 19/08	67 Invermarge Dr.
Rose Glowinsky	Dec 20/08	80 Antibes Drive
Ada Greenwood	Dec 20/08	1555 Finch Avenue East
Rene Bernstein	Dec 20/08	650 Briar Hill Avenue
Bessie Smith	Dec 21/08	14 St. Matthews Road
Joseph Allen	Dec 22/08	
Esther Sandberg	Dec 23/08	28 Millgate Cres
Cara Feldman	Dec 23/08	7 Forest Wood
Sy Techner	Dec 23/08	355 St Clair Ave. W.
Esther Goodman	Dec 23/08	76 Invermay Avenue
Cathy Gabor	Dec 23/08	668 Roselawn Avenue
Sidney Valo	Dec 24/08	40 Rosehill Avenue
Ethel Sparaga	Dec 25/08	55 Ameer Avenue
Fred Malemud	Dec 25/08	4001 Bayview Avenue
Moe Freedman	Dec 26/08	4350 Bathurst St.
Jacqueline Spitzer	Dec 26/08	541 Finch Avenue W.,
Layla Fisher	Dec 30/08	1 Northwestern Avenue
Alfy Goldberg	Dec 30/08	1555 Finch Avenue East,
Jack (Jay) Waltman	Dec 31/08	7 Ambassador Place
Kate Freeman	Dec 31/08	18 Robbie Avenue
Rose Goldenberg	Dec 31/08	2515 Bathurst St.
Ethel Rotberg	Jan 2/09	65 Spring Garden Ave
Bernard Cowan	Jan 2/09	51 Lakeshore Blvd
Min Grossman	Jan 2/09	110 Promenade Circle
Luta Vescan	Jan 2/09	Baycrest

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Kaufman, David Harley	Dec. 15/08	48 West Borough St.
Sugar, Helen	Dec. 22/08	484 Steeles Ave. W.
Katz, Coloman	Dec. 24/08	
Davidovicz, Moshe	Dec. 24/08	18 Carscadden Dr.
Dawson, Charles (Calvin)	Dec. 24/08	Private
Nudelman, Michael	Dec. 25/08	26 Holm Crescent
Gardashnik, Galina	Dec. 25/08	Private
Shabataev, Sima	Dec. 26/08	Private
Blumenow, John	Dec. 27/08	550 Cummer Ave.
Heimlich, Esther	Dec. 27/08	3555 Bathurst St.
Tward, Toby J.	Dec. 28/08	86 Dequincy Blvd.
Silver, Nathan	Dec. 28/08	Private
Collin, Elaine	Dec. 29/08	22 Norfinch Ave.

HEBREW BASIC

Stanley Iscove	Dec 19/08	370 Ridelle Avenue
David Eigles	Dec 19/08	1919 Quentin Street
Ephraim Gale	Dec 22/08	2075 Bayview Ave.
Selina Gold-Korman	Dec 28/08	200 White Oaks Ct

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TAMMY SPEISMAN
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SUSAN, LORNE, JASON & JEREMY LEBOW

On Campus

Students find optimism during Gaza operation

By SHIRIN EZEKIEL
Special to The CJN

Guest Voice

As Shabbat began in Jerusalem, our group headed to the Kotel.

We saw the rooftops of the Old City from the path we walked on, and chanukiyot lit the way.

As part of Hillel of Greater Toronto's New Media Initiative, 16 students travelled to Israel to take part in a program to develop their skills in communication technology.

When we approached the Kotel, we covered the eyes of Simon, the only participant in the program who had never been to Jerusalem.

When he finally opened his eyes at one of the lookout points we stopped at, he broke out in tears of both awe and excitement. The group then made its way to the Kotel and created a Carlebach minyan, to which more than 70 people joined and danced.

Shabbat began as the perfect ending for an intensive week of workshops in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

The group awoke well rested and ready to hear from Khaled Abu Tomeh, the Palestinian affairs correspondent for the Jerusalem Post.

He broke the news of the operation in the Gaza Strip that had begun a few hours earlier on Dec. 27. Our group's participants were in a state of shock about how quickly things can change in Israel.

The conversation with Tomeh revolved around how the operation would proceed and how he foresees the future of the conflict.

Tomeh's honesty left us in deep thought about the complexity of the situation, for which he could see no easy solution, even with his vast expertise in reporting from both sides.

Then things began changing rapidly around us. Israelis we knew were called up for army reserve duty, including our tour guide.

Security in Jerusalem was heightened and highly visible, with most of the Arab market in the Old City of Jerusalem closed.

Although daily life continued as usual, the conversations we heard revolved around the situation in Gaza.

In Jerusalem, Jews and Arabs we spoke to were all concerned about the chain of events that had led to the Gaza operation.

When our group ventured north, it felt like a world apart.

We had the opportunity to discuss the situation with Israeli citizens of all faiths – Christians, Muslims, Druze – and were surprised that they were all in favour of ensuring the safety of the inhabitants of Israel.

While in the north, our group came face to face with the power of new media, when one little BlackBerry brought the most current news to our group, including a fascinating article on how new media is tackling the challenge of covering the Gaza operation.

Social networking tools such as blogs, Facebook and Twitter are new ways to distribute information in a variety of media to broader audiences.

The events in Israel made our mission even more clear, as we saw how new media made an immediate impact on our lives.

The most important part of experiencing Israel is to try to bring home the feelings on the ground.

They motivate us to do more, and to bring back to campus the sense of peace, openness and dialogue that exists there.

If in such serious times, dialogue and optimism can be found in Israel, then there is a way we can do the same in Canada.

FRIENDLY GESTURE: Students from Ashkelon examine a snake at the Belmonte Science Laboratories for Youth at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Hebrew U's Authority for Community and Youth is helping the besieged residents of southern Israel by hosting young people from the area at the university. It has welcomed some 100 grade 8 and 9 students from Ashkelon, Sderot and Netivot who are taking part in a program that aims to encourage middle and high school students from peripheral areas to further their educations. ***[Israel photo]***

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Diplomats work towards ceasefire

By LESLIE SUSSER
JTA

JERUSALEM — As the war in Gaza continues, with Israeli ground troops poised to intensify their actions against Hamas militants, weapons' stores and rocket-launching sites, diplomatic efforts to end the fighting have gathered pace.

Israeli analysts said that although the Hamas military infrastructure has been dealt a devastating blow, the organization's fighting force remains largely intact. One of the goals of the Israeli ground operation is to hit the militia's fighters hard, which could entail tough house-to-house combat.

Analysis

The militiamen have taken up positions in built-up areas in densely populated towns and refugee camps, and confronting them in those conditions could be very risky for Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians.

The possibility of serious escalation, however, brought French President Nicolas Sarkozy and three European foreign ministers to Jerusalem to try to bring the fighting in Gaza to an end. Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni indicated Israel's readiness to end the war, but only if its exit demands were met.

The Israeli dilemma is how to create conditions that guarantee security for southern Israel without granting Hamas a measure of international legitimacy. The Israelis have been warning against a scenario in which a defeated Hamas makes enormous political gains merely by being treated by the international community as a full partner in ceasefire negotiations.

This, they argue, is totally unacceptable: Hamas gained power through a violent coup in June 2007 and is dedicated to Israel's destruction. The Israelis are therefore seeking a new international "arrangement" that would address all their security concerns, as well as the issue of border crossings to and from Gaza, without Hamas having any say in the negotiating process.

In their contacts with the Americans and Europeans, Israeli leaders have outlined three key elements to be included in the new arrangements: a credible ceasefire to end rocket fire on Israeli civilians, an internationally supervised mechanism to prevent Hamas rearming, and joint European Union, Egyptian and Palestinian Authority supervision at border crossing points.

To deter Hamas from firing more rockets after a ceasefire is achieved, Israel wants to have its right to retaliate written into the ceasefire terms.

Israel's biggest headache is the possibility of Hamas rebuilding and enhancing its rocket-firing capabilities by smuggling new and longer-range weapons across the border with Egypt.

Israel is demanding that the new arrangements include collapsing all the smuggling tunnels under the Philadelphi route along the Gaza-Egypt border; erecting a physical barrier on the Egyptian side of the border that would make smuggling virtually impossible; deploying an international force in the buffer zone between Egypt and Gaza; and securing a commitment from Egypt to stop the flow of arms into Sinai, from where they find their way to the Gaza border.

Hamas' main demand has been that Israel allow the opening of all crossing points in and out of Gaza. Israel says it is prepared to do so, on the basis of a 2005 agreement under which the crossings would be supervised jointly by Israel, the Palestinian Authority (not Hamas), Egypt and the European Union. This is also the Egyptian position with regard to the Rafah crossing point from Gaza into Egypt.

One of the difficulties with the uncompromising Israeli position against talking to Hamas is that it complicates chances for the return of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Israeli leaders say they would like to see Shalit return as part of the overall ceasefire arrangement, but it is hard to see how this could be accomplished without a prisoner exchange deal with Hamas.

The Americans and Europeans are split in their approach to the Israeli ceasefire terms. The Americans say a ceasefire should be put in place only when conditions exist for it to be stable and lasting. The Europeans, however, say a ceasefire should go into effect immediately. They say these aims could be secured more easily once a ceasefire is in place.

Egyptians have strong regional and domestic reasons for their opposition to Hamas. They see Iran as their most dangerous regional foe, and Gaza controlled by Hamas as a forward Iranian base on their doorstep. They also fear the ideological connection between Hamas and the seditious opposition Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. And they realize that the border tunnels could support terror and violence in the opposite direction – from Gaza into Egypt.

Israel and Egypt thus have a common interest in weakening Hamas and moderating Iranian influence in Gaza.

Gaza rockets continue during humanitarian lull

JTA

JERUSALEM — Two houses in southern Israel were hit by Hamas rockets during a voluntary Israeli humanitarian ceasefire.

Israel stopped fighting for three hours Monday, as it has daily for the last week, in order to allow Palestinian civilians to restock or change locations and to allow aid agencies to distribute goods during the 17th day of Operation Cast Lead. But Hamas continued to fire rockets at Israel during the lull, scoring direct hits on homes in Ashkelon and Sderot. No one was injured, though several people went into shock and the homes were badly damaged.

One rocket landed very close to an Ashkelon high school where students had returned and were holding classes in bomb shelters. Attendance at the school, however, was very low.

At least 16 rockets have hit southern Israel since Monday morning. According to reports, the number of rocket and mortar strikes on southern Israel has significantly decreased since the start of the operation.

Reserve soldiers have been sent into Gaza, an indication that the operation may be widening.

Overnight, the air force hit four weapons storehouses located in the homes of Hamas operatives, two tunnels dug under the homes of Hamas operatives and a smuggling tunnel on Gaza's border with Egypt, as well as one rocket launching position. Israel Defence Forces ground troops clashed with armed Hamas gunmen in the northern Gaza Strip.

Canadian Friends of the HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University

deeply mourn the passing of a committed friend and supporter

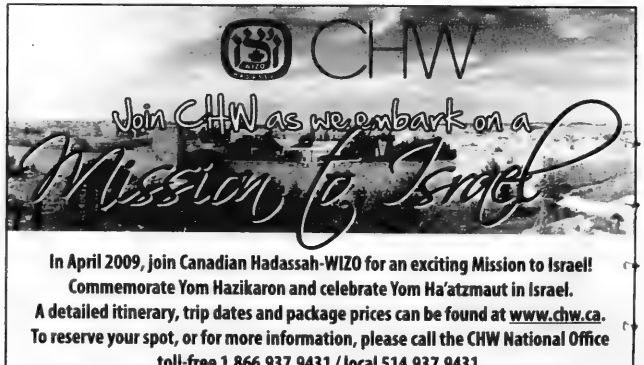
H. Peter Oberlander, O.C., Ph.D., FRAIC, LLD ז"ל

Inaugural visiting faculty member of the Canadian Studies program, Hebrew University

His leadership, involvement and dedication to
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem will always be remembered

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife Cornelia, his children Tim and Julie, Judy and Mark, Wendy and the entire family

Menachem Magidor, *President, Hebrew University of Jerusalem*
Ronnie Appleby, Q.C., *National President*
Rami Kleinmann, *National Director*



In April 2009, join Canadian Hadassah-WIZO for an exciting Mission to Israel!
Commemorate Yom Hazikaron and celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut in Israel.
A detailed itinerary, trip dates and package prices can be found at www.chw.ca.
To reserve your spot, or for more information, please call the CHW National Office toll-free 1.866.937.9431 / local 514.937.9431.

Pro-Israel rallies held around world

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd

More than 10,000 people gathered on 42nd Street in New York, outside the Israeli consulate, to show their support for the Gaza offensive.

Meanwhile, thousands more pro-Israel demonstrators rallied across Europe, including Prague, Dublin, Antwerp, Berlin, London and Manchester.

The demonstrations were held amid a series of pro-Palestinian protests in cities throughout Europe and Muslim states, many of which have turned violent and included anti-Semitic terms to condemn the operation.

In New York, demonstrators donned red hats as a symbol of Israel's "Colour Red" rocket alert, chanting "*Am Yisrael Chai*" – the people of Israel live — as politicians took to the stage to voice their support of the offensive.

British organizers estimated that as many as 20,000 people participated in the London demonstration, which took place in Trafalgar Square. A parallel rally was held in Manchester's Albert Square.

"It was important for Anglo-Jewry to show support and solidarity with Israel. I felt proud to be Jewish," said Theo Julius, a participant at the London demonstration.

Demonstrators waved placards reading "End Hamas Terror – Peace for the People of Israel and Gaza."

Meanwhile, in a letter published in Britain's Observer newspaper on Sunday, 11 leading BritishJ e w s urged Israel to end its Gaza campaign and negotiate a settlement for security reasons.

"We are concerned that rather than bringing security to Israel, a continued military offensive could strengthen extremists, destabilize the region and exacerbate tensions inside Israel with its one million Arab citizens," the letter said.

Among the signatories were Baroness Julia Neuberger, former Local Government Association chairman Sir Jeremy Beecham and Tony Bayfield, the head of the Movement for Reform Judaism.

They said the rocket attacks by Hamas and other militant Palestinian groups were "war crimes against Israel" and that they supported Israel's right in putting a stop to the rocket attacks. But it questioned the military actions and called for a stop.

"However, we believe that now only negotiations can secure long-term security for Israel and the region," it said.

In Dublin, supporters gathered waving Israeli flags and singing psalms in lashing rain, separated by a police barricade from a rival pro-Palestinian rally.

"Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East and has a right to defend itself," said Annette Horseman, 43, from Dublin.

Gilad Handler, 25, an Israeli high-tech worker living in Dublin, said the high number of Palestinian civilian casualties was difficult for Israelis.

"We don't want war with Gaza," he said. "But it's enough getting years of rocket barrages on our heads from there."

On Saturday, violent clashes broke out near the Israeli Embassy in London as thousands of people marched to protest the Gaza offensive.

Winnipeg teens at a rally in their city last week.
[*Rhonda Spivak photo*]

Demonstrators smashed shop windows, and a policeman was knocked unconscious attempting to control the crowd. At a similar rally last week in Holland, a Dutch legislator called for "intifadah" in order to "free Palestine."

The London rallies on Sunday passed without a repeat of the violent scenes from a day earlier.

Meanwhile, thousands of demonstrators, including high-profile actors and politicians, marched peacefully through Madrid demanding increased international action against Israel's offensive, some chanting, "We are all Palestinians."

The Israeli Embassy in the Spanish capital issued a statement asking why demonstrators there had never protested against aggression by Hamas and calling recent anti-Israel rallies "a double standard."

In Italy, where thousands marched in Naples and Genoa to demand an end to violence in Gaza, Defence Minister Ignazio La Russa said he did not oppose protests but called public Muslim prayers by demonstrators a challenge to peace.

On Saturday, thousands of Muslims knelt in prayer before Milan's central train station. A week ago, Muslims held prayers in front of the city centre cathedral, angering right-wing politicians in the overwhelmingly Catholic country.

While Sunday's pro-Palestinian protests were overwhelmingly peaceful, a Reuters photographer in Brussels reported windows had been smashed and a car overturned and set alight in the area where the city's anti-Israel march had ended.

Chicago shuls vandalized

JTA

CHICAGO — At least three Chicago-area synagogues were vandalized following rallies in support of and against Israel.

The synagogues were defaced early last Saturday morning by two vandals who smashed windows and doors with rocks and bricks and sprayed pro-Palestinian graffiti on the buildings. The men were captured on a video surveillance camera at one synagogue and were seen by a caretaker fleeing the scene at a second shul.

Some of the graffiti read "Death to Israel" and "Free Palestine," according to local reports.

Police believe the incidents could be related, and they're currently being investigated as hate crimes by the Chicago Police Department and the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, according to the Secure Community Network, which co-ordinates security for North American Jewish institutions. The Chicago Tribune reported that a fourth synagogue, in the suburb of Lincolnwood, was also vandalized.

The vandalism incidents, and an attempt late the previous Friday afternoon by four unknown men in Chicago to enter a Jewish federation building, followed a Jewish communal rally Friday in support of Israel and a pro-Palestinian rally later in the day.

☆ STAR-K ALERT

Celestial Seasonings brand **English Toffee** & **Decaf Vanilla Maple** teas in Canada were incorrectly labeled with a Star-K. They should bear a Scroll-K-Dairy (Vaad HaKashrus of Denver). These teas are cholov stam.

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite our readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes. Stories should not exceed 2,000 words.

We must receive your submissions no later than Friday, March 12. E-mail submissions are preferred, but works can also be sent by mail or brought to our office. E-mail: **info@cjnews.com.** Mail: 1500 Don Mills Rd., Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4. Submissions will *not* be returned. Only writers whose work is chosen for publication will be contacted.

CJN Purim Art Contest

It's time again for our annual **Purim Art Contest**.

Who can enter: Children in grades 1 to 6 inclusive are eligible. The children of *CJN* employees are not eligible.

Prizes: The judges will choose one drawing from two different students in each grade. These "winning" drawings will be published in *The CJN*'s 2009-Purim Poster. In addition, each of the 12 children whose drawings have been selected will receive a cheque for $25.

How to enter: You may submit as many drawings as you want. However, they should not be too small nor too large. Please paint or draw bright, bold, colourful pictures. You may use markers, crayons, paint or pencils. Please send us your name, address, phone number, age and grade along with your drawings.

You may mail or deliver your drawings to: CJN Community Contests, The Canadian Jewish News, 1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4. If you want us to return the pictures to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, we will be unable to do so.

The contest closes at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2009. We will undoubtedly receive many wonderful submissions from children all across the country. But only 12 of the drawings will be chosen as the "winners." The judges will base their decisions on a number of factors such as: the use of colour, the imaginative quality of the drawing and the way it tells an aspect of the story of Purim. The judges' decisions will be final. The chances of winning depend upon the number and quality of submissions received.

How the winner will be announced: The children whose pictures are chosen will be notified by telephone before the start of Shabbat on Friday, February 20, 2009.

When the prizes will be awarded: The "winning" pictures will be published in *The CJN* of March 5, 2009. Have fun and good luck.

Any litigation respecting the conduct and awarding of a prize in this contest may be submitted to the Régie des Loteries et courses du Québec

'We continue to be passionate about not hitting civilians'

Continued from page 1

"You have people who ask, why are we making the effort? Why can't we be like other air forces like in Iraq and Afghanistan who hit a target no matter what's around it? That's deep in our values. It's not a slogan."

S. recently expounded on the IAF's rules of engagement at a solidarity and information meeting sponsored by the Association for Soldiers in Israel – Canada. Although he's a reservist and no longer on active duty, military regulations require him to be identified only by an initial.

S. started his military career flying Skyhawks, and for the last 20 years, he piloted F-16s. He flew over Gaza, and he was involved in missions over Lebanon, where military targets and civilian dwellings are often indistinguishable.

As an officer in the IAF's Valley Squadron, he saw first hand how the air force attempts to minimize civilian deaths.

Concern for preventing civilian casualties "is almost at the same level of the operational demand of hitting people," he said. "We do more than any air force in the world to hit only those who want to kill us." Pilots can be grounded for failing to hit a designated target.

Hamas operates behind human shields

As an example, S. recalled a mission that took place four or five years ago. The air force received reliable intelligence that a group of senior Hamas leaders was gathering for a meeting in a Gaza apartment building. It was asked to bomb the meeting, but the location of the meeting – inside a four-storey apartment building – prompted a conference of senior military commanders and Ariel Sharon, at the time acting in his capacity as minister of defence.

In the end, it was decided that the attack plane would employ a relatively small 500-pound bomb "to minimize damage to the surrounding buildings," S. said.

The bomb exploded in the building's upper floor and took it out. However, the meeting was being held one floor below and the Hamas officials all escaped. A larger bomb would have taken out the building and perhaps others nearby, S. pointed out.

The mission highlights the difficulties faced by the air force in operating in Gaza. "Hamas does all it can to do all their activities within civilian population," he said. Although the area is densely populated, there are open places they could move to, he said.

A few weeks ago, the Israeli media reported on an incident that again demonstrated Hamas employing human shields. A senior Hamas official received a pre-recorded phone call saying his home was about to be destroyed. Despite the warning, pilots in observation aircraft noted that civilians suddenly were flocking to the building's roof.

That information was relayed to senior commanders, who have the final say in whether to launch an attack. A decision was made to "throw a smaller munitions bomb near the people." With the nearby explosion, the roof was quickly vacated and the mission to destroy the building proceeded, S. said.

He noted that the IAF employs only highly accurate munitions in Gaza – laser-guided or GPS-controlled bombs – to try to control civilian casualties.

Still, the air force faces operational quandaries. What to do when munitions are housed in the basement of a civilian building? One solution: the military has employed leaflet warnings and cellphone messages, telling people in the building to leave before the attack, he said.

S., who is in Toronto for a short visit, said Israelis are fully supportive of current military operation and the pilots who fly operational missions overwhelmingly know they are in the right.

Still, he acknowledges, it pains him to see images of wounded Palestinian children. "It's hard to see that, and I do empathize with the Palestinian mothers. On the other hand, this is total self defence.

"We want to keep it [civilian casualties] under zero, but we know it's impossible the way Hamas fights."

It's a problem the Israeli Air Force faces every day. Sometimes missions are aborted to prevent Palestinian casualties. And that can put Israeli civilians at risk.

"You miss a lot of opportunities and allow people to continue rocket attacks and sometimes suicide attacks," he said.

"There are hundreds and thousands of man hours of very talented people and sophisticated machines doing patrols and alerts to get big successes you rarely hear about in the news... It's hard to believe we are spending so much our talent" on planning pinpoint attacks on terrorists. Instead, that talent and time could have been put to use building the State of Israel, he said.

But, he continued, "it's something we have to do."

"I'm very proud of what we're doing.

"I wish for us that we continue to be passionate about not hitting civilian people. It's sometimes easy to shut yourself off and concentrate on targets being hit. But the way we do it is important. Thinking about the consequences of hitting civilians, that is the only way to win this war."

Israel Briefs

UN to halt aid deliveries

The United Nations said it will stop aid deliveries to the Gaza Strip after a worker was killed. The driver of a UN truck heading to the Erez crossing to pick up an aid shipment was killed Jan. 8 by what the United Nations said were Israeli tank shells. The Israel Defence Forces said that it's investigating the incident. The United Nations said it will halt the aid deliveries until the safety of its staff can be guaranteed.

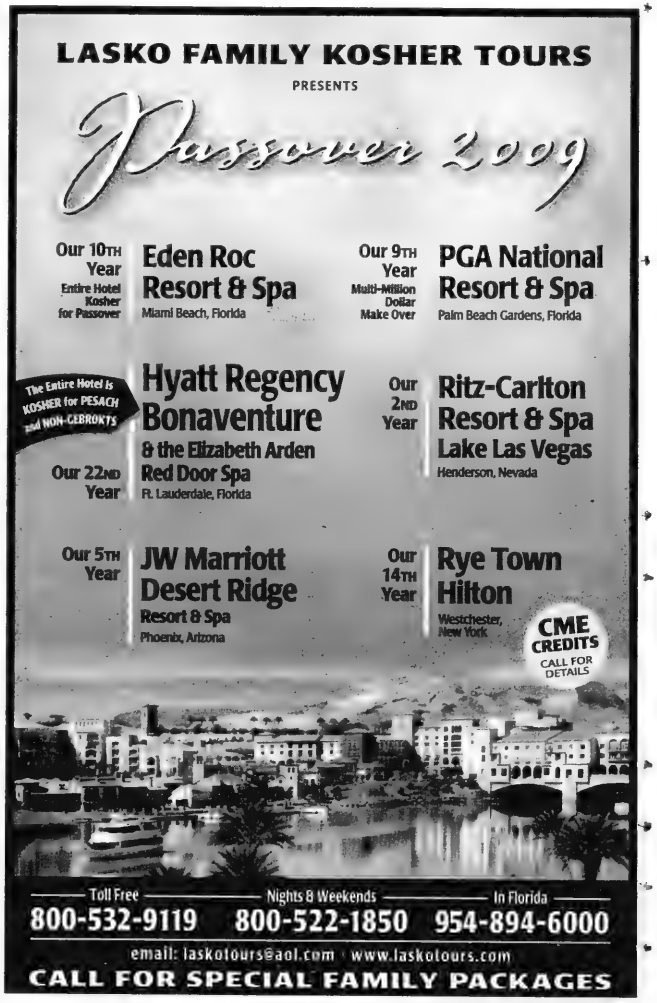
Ceasefire order ignored

Israel and Hamas ignored last week's UN Security Council call for a ceasefire. The Security Council issued a resolution Jan. 8 calling for an immediate ceasefire and for an end to weapons smuggling into the Gaza Strip. The Israeli cabinet met the next day and decided to ignore the resolution. Hamas was also reportedly ignoring the resolution.

Cairo talks supported

Israeli officials said the end to the war in Gaza would most likely emerge from talks in Cairo and not at the United Nations. The Cairo talks were the likeliest path to a "political solution," the officials told reporters Jan. 8, adding that they did not regard as serious negotiations in New York aimed at arriving at a UN Security Council consensus on ending the Gaza war. Few details about the "Mubarak initiative," named for the Egyptian president, are known, but reports said it proposes an end to attacks from Gaza and an end to the smuggling of weapons into Gaza in exchange for opening commercial crossings into the strip.

– with files from JTA



East of Berlin delves into the secrets of a father's past

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

Hannah Moscovitch's East of Berlin is a powerful one-act play.

It opens with Rudi, the son of a Nazi war criminal, nervously trying to light his cigarette. Once he composes himself, he shares his story with the audience, revealing the struggles he faces because of his father's horrific past.

Rudi, brilliantly portrayed by Brendan Gall, makes the audience aware of the torment he faces as the son of a Nazi. Through a series of flashbacks, the character recounts the painful life he's led since his childhood friend Hermann, played by Paul Dunn, reveals that Rudi's father was a Nazi doctor at Auschwitz.

Born after the war, Rudi grew up believing his father was a good man who fought faithfully for his country and lost. He never questioned why his family frequently moved from one South American country to another until they settled in Paraguay.

As Rudi poses questions to the audience searching for ways to come to grips with his father's past, Moscovitch's script cleverly gets the audience to think of how we might deal with these very difficult issues.

What should a person do if they find out that someone they love has kept his past a secret? Could the same parent that read you a bedtime story and who gave you an "ordinary" life be capable of atrocities? Should children be responsible for their parents' conduct?

It's not until Rudi meets a young Jewish woman, Sarah (Diana Donnelly), a Holocaust survivor's daughter, that he fully understands the enormity of his father's actions.

Rudi (Brendan Gall) shows Sarah (Diana Donnelly) his father's jacket from the war.

Moscovitch (who also wrote The Russian Play and Essay) and director Alisa Palmer skillfully take you on a 90-minute journey, one that's difficult to deal with at times, but one you won't want to miss. The moving performances by the three cast members are believable and understated, as is the simple yet creative set design, consisting of bookcases with a door leading to Rudi's past.

This production marks the play's return to the Tarragon Theatre's Extra Space. A 2007 production garnered wide critical praise, winning the Dora Mavor Moore Award for outstanding set design (Camellia Koo) and a nomination for outstanding new play(Moscovitch). The current production has the same cast and crew as its 2007 debut.

The up-and-coming playwright was inspired to develop this play while in the 2006-2007 Tarragon Playwright's Unit, after reading two books – Legacy of Silence and Born Guilty – that included a series of interviews with Nazi children conducted by Jews. The play's title refers to the euphemism Germans used for what was happening to Jews, claiming they were being "resettled in the east." During the war, Jews of Berlin coined the term "going east" to mean "going to the death."

The play runs at the Tarragon until Feb. 1. It then plays at the Touchstone Theatre in Vancouver from Feb. 18 to 28, and at the Theatre Network in Edmonton from March 10 to 29.

Tickets for the Toronto production are available at the Tarragon box office, 30 Bridgman Ave., 416-531-1827. Tuesday–Saturday performances at 8 p.m. are $35-45. Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2:30 p.m. are $35 and Friday night rush seats are $15.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

LORIE WOLF CD RELEASE CONCERT FEATURES FULL ARRAY OF MUSICIANS

Drummer **Lorie Wolf** is joined by guest pianist **Marilyn Lerner** and musicians **Don Thompson**, **Mike Wark**, **Terry Quinney**, **Mike McClennan**, **Aleksandar Gajic**, **Aviva Chernick**, **Graham Campbell**, **Christopher Butcher** and **Lina Allemano**.

The occasion is a CD release concert for her debut recording, Taibele and Her Demon, an album of original jazz compositions themed to a story by **Isaac Bashevis Singer**. Presented in association with the Ashkenaz Foundation and the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. $15, $20. Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC, Sunday, Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. 416-645-9090. www. loriewolf.com

* * *

Wartime Thriller: Toronto Jewish Film Society presents two screenings of **Paul Verhoeven**'s 2006 thriller Black Book, about a Jewish singer (**Carice Von Houten**) turned double agent in occupied Holland. A deeply serious meditation on what it takes to stay alive during wartime, the film offers a lacerating critique of the anti-Semitism that festered within the country's resistance movement. Guest speaker, film critic **Adam Nayman**. Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC, $15, $10. Sunday, Jan. 25. 4 & 7:30 p.m. Rush tickets available at the door before each screening.

* * *

Friends of Yiddish: The prose of **Chaim Grade,** one of the leading Yiddish writers of the 20th century, comes to vivid life when **Rabbi Edward Goldfarb** reads in Yiddish (with some English translation) from several of Grade's most celebrated prose works at the January program of the Friends of Yiddish.

A founding member of the Young Vilna group of Jewish experimental artists, Grade survived the Holocaust and afterward immigrated to the United States. Rabbi Goldfarb, semi-retired from Holy Blossom Temple, reads from the novels The Agunah and The Yeshiva, and the short story, My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseyner. Members free, guests $5. Workmen's Circle Hall, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Sunday, Jan. 18, 11 a.m.

* * *

Israeli Film: The Toronto Jewish Film Festival's Chai Tea & A Movie series continues with a screening of Galilee Eskimos, an Israeli feature in Hebrew with English subtitles. Twelve senior citizens wake one morning to find their kibbutz deserted; the bank has foreclosed and other residents have left. The seniors band together to keep their kibbutz and to oppose the construction of a luxury spa and casino. $15. Sheppard Grande, Yonge & Sheppard. Sunday, Jan. 18, tea 4 p.m., film 5 p.m. 416-967-1528. www.tjff.com

* * *

Names in the News: Child of a Holocaust survivor and founder of Toronto's Theatre Asylum, theatre director **Jennifer H. Capraru** witnessed the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide while a script supervisor for the 2007 feature film Shake Hands With the Devil.

Wanting to contribute to the healing process, Capraru recently founded Isoko, a Kigali-based international theatre company with a mandate to promote healing and peace through theatre. (Isoko means "the source" in the Rwandan language of Kinyarwanda.)

"Rwanda is a post-conflict country healing from genocide," Capraru said. "I have found a significant part of my voice as a theatre artist making work around the Holocaust. Now, I am hoping to help Rwanda artists find their voices and share their tough lessons about how this little land continues to be a beacon of successful reconciliation shining in a troubled world." www.isoko-rwanda.org

Lorie Wolf

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Smouldering Masterpiece Theatre presents comedian **Deb Filler** in Well, I'll Tell Ya, directed by Louise Fagan. $25. Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC. Jan. 29 and 31, 8 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 1, 3 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org

• Yichud-Seclusion, a play by **Julie Tepperman,** explores intimate moments surrounding the arranged wedding of a young Orthodox couple and how it affects their families. Featuring **Daniel Karasik**, **Linda Kash**, **Adam Lazarus**, **Neil Naft**, **Paul O'Sullivan**, **Michael Rubenfeld**, **Julie Tepperman**, **Aaron Willis** and a live klezmer band. Part of the Next Stage Festival, the play continues at the Factory Studio Theatre until Jan. 18. $15, $12. 416-966-1062

• **Jordan Klapman**'s Music Talk focuses on **Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman**: Black, White, Blues and Rhythm, another in the series on Rock 'n' Roll Jews. $9, includes a light breakfast. Miles Nadal JCC, Sunday, Jan. 18, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0

• Best of 2008, an exhibition featuring award winners from the 2008 Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition, is at the FCP Gallery, 100 King St. W., until Feb. 20.

• The Israeli film Waltz with Bashir received another major boost when the U.S.-based National Society of Film Critics named it the best picture of 2008. Directed by **Ari Folman**, the film combines state-of-the-art animation, an anti-war documentary theme, and a psychoanalytical approach to recover the memory of a traumatized Israeli soldier.

THE GALILEE ESKIMOS

Twelve senior citizens wake one morning to find their kibbutz deserted. The bank has foreclosed on the property and the other residents have left with all their belongings. The seniors band together to keep their kibbutz and to oppose the construction of a luxury spa and casino which will destroy their community. Laugh and cry with the old timers as they attempt to preserve the lifestyle and the principles for which they fought their entire lives. *Hebrew with English subtitles, 99 mins.*

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The Galilee Eskimos is both bitter and sweet

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Jonathan Paz's Israeli film, The Galilee Eskimos, which is scheduled to be screened by the Jewish Film Society on Jan. 18 at 5 p.m. at the Sheppard Grande Cinema, is bittersweet in every respect.

When a kibbutz near the Lebanese border goes bankrupt, only the senior citizens remain behind, forcing them to adapt to a new reality and fight off an army of bailiffs intent on foreclosing them. The situation lends itself to improvisation, and Paz rises to the occasion.

Not knowing that plans are afoot to sell the kibbutz to a crass developer who wants to transform it into a Las Vegas-style resort – complete with casinos and prostitutes – the last remaining residents try to restore it to a modicum of normality. They restart the generator, turn on the water and electricity, tend to the only cow in the shed, organize meals and clean up the premises.

Still, as one woman complains, they have been left to fend for themselves, like dying Eskimos. This is the stuff of tragedy. The young people have fled, leaving the most vulnerable segment of the kibbutz inhabitants in the lurch. No wonder they feel abandoned and forlorn.

In Paz's hands, however, heartbreak morphs into hope. Having inherited immense responsibilities, the elderly kibbutzniks thrive as they reconnect with each other and joyfully, if tentatively, rediscover their youth, vitality and sexuality. In the process, buried secrets are unearthed, old love affairs are reignited and half-forgotten sentimental songs from the 1948 War of Independence are sung with gusto once again.

Oldsters at a northern kibbutz take control of their lives in Jonathan Paz's Israeli film The Galilee Eskimos.

It's a pleasure watching these oldsters take control of their lives.

Of course, they can't stop the march of time. Kibbutzim are being "privatized" left and right. But they do try to reverse the inevitable

The Galilee Eskimos is a heart warming movie distinguished by good acting from an ensemble of seasoned actors, such as Dina Doron and Hugo Yarden, and by snappy dialogue.

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Cruise gives precise performance in Valkyrie

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Of the 15 known assassination plots hatched against Adolf Hitler by anti-Nazi resisters in Germany, the most ambitious one was mounted by senior German army officers and dissenting politicians on July 20, 1944.

Had they succeeded, the course of history may well have changed. Alas, the plot failed, and one of the key participants, Col. Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg, was summarily executed by a vengeful Nazi regime.

Bryan Singer's historical thriller, Valkyrie, which is currently playing in Toronto, is based on these events. Singer has made an earnest effort to recreate the plot, which almost succeeded, and Valkyrie is a workmanlike account of it.

The two-hour film, starring Tom Cruise as the heroic Von Stauffenberg, unfolds in three distinct phases.

It opens in 1943 in the bright sunshine of the Tunisian desert, where Von Stauffenberg – an outspoken officer who has qualms about Germany's military strategy in North Africa – is posted.

Von Stauffenberg's command car is strafed by an Allied bombing raid and he is severely injured, losing his right hand, left eye and two fingers on his left hand.

The movie shifts to Germany, where Maj.-Gen. Henning von Tresckow (Kenneth Branagh) tries to assassinate Hitler by placing a bomb inside a wine case aboard Hitler's personal aircraft.

The device fails to detonate, forcing von Tresckow to go back to the drawing board. He recruits Von Stauffenberg, a Catholic from an aristocratic family. Von Stauffenberg joins the German resistance movement because he is appalled by Germany's treatment of civilians, including Jews, in Nazi-occupied areas and wants to save his country from certain defeat.

In this segment, the plotters abort a plan to kill Hitler, because SS chieftain Heinrich Himmler has surprisingly not shown up at a meeting.

Cruise, stiff and correct in an army uniform and a black patch covering one of his eyes, portrays Von Stauffenberg with militaristic precision in a plausible performance. That he and the other actors deliver their lines in American and British-accented English is definitely not off-putting.

The last part of the film turns on the explosion that slightly injured Hitler (David Bamber) in his secluded compound in East Prussia and on Hitler's wrath and payback.

Singer, whose films hum with energy and purpose, elicits fine performances from an accomplished cast that includes Bill Nighy, Terence Stamp, Kevin McNally and Christian Berkel as four of the anti-Nazi dissenters and Carice van Houten as Von Stauffenberg's loyal wife.

Valkyrie stands as a cinematic monument to a plot that would have had incalculable consequences, both on World War II and the Holocaust, had it been successful.

Tom Cruise as Col. Claus Schenk Graf Von Stauffenberg

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Zane Zalis is a big believer in the power of the arts to break through barriers. [Rhonda Spivak photo]

New musical composition based on Holocaust survivor testimony

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Composer, pianist and high school teacher Zane Zalis created his newest work, I Believe, with the goal of educating young people about the Holocaust.

Zalis, a Ukrainian Catholic, and members of Prodigy – a student vocal ensemble he founded – performed an excerpt from I Believe in December at a gathering of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg.

One of the songs from the piece, I Have a Name, which ends with the words, "You can take me down, but you can never take away my name," left many members of the audience visibly moved, and Zalis and Prodigy received a standing ovation.

"The work is made up of 12 different chapters, that when performed sequentially, comprise a cohesive show," said Zalis, who is musical program director at Miles Macdonell Collegiate in Winnipeg.

"I Believe unfolds as a story from the minds of the victims and of the perpetrators," he says. "I have spent the last four years of my life working on this."

Based on survivor testimony and Zalis' research, I Believe recounts the story of the Holocaust and can be used as a general lesson for future peace. A huge work aimed at general audiences, it includes a full chorus, a children's choir, a full orchestra and soloists.

"The music for I Believe can't be categorized and is constantly changing and malleable," says Zalis, who wrote the music first and then the lyrics.

Last summer, Zalis was a guest presenter at a conference put on by the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum in Jerusalem. "It was a very positive presentation. A Holocaust educator from Durban, South Africa [who was at the conference] is interested in potentially bringing the show there. My goal is for symphonies around the world to present the show," he says.

Zalis said the director of the Elgin Symphony in the Chicago area has expressed interest in presenting the work there.

Zalis believes that in order to properly teach the message of the Holocaust, it should be understood not merely as a subject of interest to the Jewish people, but to all of humanity.

"If we are going to maintain remembrance of the Holocaust in the significant proportions it merits and warrants, then it must be taken to a universal arena," he says. "I am a big believer in the power of the arts to break through walls and barriers. Music for me is a transcendent language"

He stressed that the composition is youth friendly. "What is very important is that youths, ages 17 to 20, really like the music. The WSO [Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra] is excited because this work will bring a whole new crowd to the symphony," Zalis says. "It is a serious work that's accessible to teenagers and the most sophisticated listeners."

The idea for I Believe was born when Zalis was asked to get involved in composing a feature piece for a gala concert for the Mauro Centre of Peace and Justice at the University of Manitoba.

"[After reading about genocide and justice], I concluded that the Holocaust was the seminal event representing the deepest depravity of mankind, and simultaneously the most sublime behaviours of mankind [manifested by those heroes who tried to aid and give refuge to the victims]," he says.

"I wrote an overture [titled] I Believe [for the Mauro Centre] and then decided to write a whole show on this theme… In the course of this, I have become good friends with some survivors."

Zalis has received the support of several private sponsors and a grant from the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba.

"My dream is one day to have a performance in Jerusalem with combined Arab and Jewish [performers]. Anything can be done," he says.

The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra premières I Believe on May 21. Facilitators from Yad Vashem will come to Manitoba for the first time to conduct educational workshops for teachers during the week the work is performed.

"This is all going to be a package so that educators can receive training and then go to hear the show… It is a way for the community to be involved, so that this becomes a town event," Zalis says.

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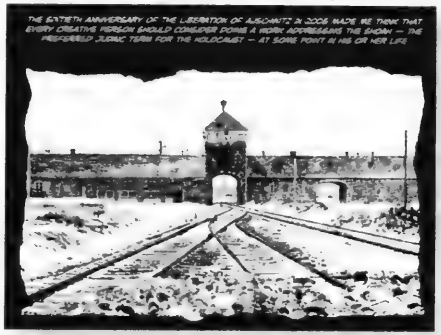
Graphic novels take on anti-Semitism and the Holocaust

By SHLOMO SCHWARTZBERG
Special to The CJN

The continuing rise in popularity of graphic novels has seen all manner of subject matter examined within their pages, including numerous books on Jewish issues and themes.

Among the best-known graphic novels are Israeli novelist Rutu Modan's award-winning Exit Wounds; James Sturm's The Golem's Mighty Swing, a fascinating portrait of a Jewish baseball team touring rural America in the 1920s; and Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer Prize-winning Holocaust parable Maus. And, of course, the many Jewish-flavoured novels of the late Will Eisner, including A Contract with God, Dropsie Avenue and Fagin the Jew, are well-known.


THE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ IN 2005 MADE ME THINK THAT EVERY CREATIVE PERSON SHOULD CONSIDER DOING A WORK ADDRESSING THE SHOAH — THE PREFERRED JUDAIC TERM FOR THE HOLOCAUST — AT SOME POINT IN HIS OR HER LIFE.

Graphics as seen in Judenhass, the graphic novel

Two recent graphic novels, Judenhass (Aardvark Vanaheim) and Good-bye Marianne: The Graphic Novel (Tundra Books), tackle anti-Semitism and the Holocaust with differing results.

Judenhass (German for Jew hatred), by Canadian artist and writer Dave Sim – the publisher of the comic book series Cerebus – is nothing less than an ambitious examination of anti-Semitism through the ages, with the Holocaust as the fulcrum linking the past, present and future. In fact, after a cursory observation that many of the American and Canadian Jewish creators of the best-known comic books, Bob Kane (Batman), Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel (Superman) and Stan Lee (co-creator of Spider-Man), would have suffered the same fate as European Jewry if they had been born in Europe instead of in the safe environs of North America, Judenhass pretty much stays focused on the Holocaust.

Most of Judenhass' 56 pages, which were painstakingly traced by Sim from photocopies of original photographs, showcase in graphic detail the corpses and barely alive survivors of Auschwitz, with accompanying captions detailing anti-Semitic quotes from famous people, such as H.G. Wells, Martin Luther and Voltaire, and facts illuminating the repressive measures and violent actions perpetrated against Jews over the centuries. It's dispiriting and truthful reading, though including comments attributed to writer and satirist Mark Twain, regarding Jews incurring the wrath of the world because of their success as moneylenders, is unfair. Twain is better known for a powerful essay praising the Jews for making such a positive mark on history and society despite their small numbers. (Sim explains in text at the end of Judenhass how and why he chose the quotes he included in his book.)

But Judenhass, despite its good intentions, made more manifest by the fact that Sim is not a Jew and intends for the graphic novel to function as a wake-up call for the non-Jewish world, is hamstrung by its choppy structure.

From its listing of anti-Semitic viewpoints and actions, it then jumps to the famous story of U.S. President Harry Truman's emotional meeting with an old Jewish friend and business partner, which galvanized him to recognize the newly created state of Israel, and follows it with the poignant speech, decrying anti-Semitism, made by Pope John Paul II at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust museum, in 2000, before returning to the present and some recent contentious remarks about Jews made by the likes of the late actor Marlon Brando, among others.

Unlike Eisner's similarly themed, admittedly preachy but effective The Plot: The Secret Story of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, Judenhass is muddled. Why stick in the uplifting Truman and Pope John Paul II anecdotes if the point of your book is to expose the anti-Jewish racism that won't ever go away? As it is, that optimistic viewpoint undercuts the rest of Judenahass. Admirably well meant as it is, Sim's graphic novel is not as thought out as it might have been.

Much more emotionally effective is Good-bye Marianne: The Graphic Novel, the comic book adaptation of Irene Watts' 10-year-old award-winning young adult novel. Marianne Koch is an 11-year-old Jewish resident of Berlin, who post-Kristallnacht, is feeling the effects of the anti-Semitic realities that are being made more manifest day by day as the Nazis begin their steps toward destroying Germany's Jews.

Taking place over a few weeks, Good-bye Marianne begins with the young girl's expulsion from school, as all Jewish children were, her run-ins with various Germans who voice anti-Semitic attitudes and, finally, her being forced to leave her beloved mother behind when she is chosen as one of the kindertransport children, who escaped the concentration camps to find refuge in England.

Beautifully and simply illustrated by Kathryn E. Shoemaker, in what are often stark sketches, Good-bye Marianne powerfully brings home with force what it must have been like to be a Jew in Nazi Germany before the beginning of World War II when discriminatory measures gave a hint of the horrors to follow. Like Judenhass, Good-bye Marianne reaches for a shred of optimism and light amid the darkness, but these elements are more organic to the story in Watts' graphic novel and hence more successful than Sim's effort. It's a modest tale well told.

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- **BATHURST / WILSON (VIVA)** Penthouse, 1225 sf, 9 ft ceilings in lr/dr, panoramic view, exquisite decor +++, **$349,000.**
- **EARL BALES** Charming unit w/ open balcony, picturesque view of park, open concept, 9 ft ceilings, locker, parking **$219,000.**
- **BATHURST / LAWRENCE** Spacious 2 bdrm, 2 bath West unit, 1200 sf, newly renovated & redesigned kitchen, **$296,000.**
- **LAWRENCE PLAZA (ENCORE) — EXCLUSIVE** Bright, spacious corner unit, 1,150 sq ft, 2 bdrms, 2 baths, eat-in kit, **$369,000.**

FEATURE HOME OF THE WEEK

BATHURST / LAWRENCE
Renovated 3 + 2 bdrm bungalow on pie-shaped lot, 45 ft frontage widens to 84 ft at rear. Fin bsmt, walk to park. **INCREDIBLY PRICED AT ONLY $449,000 — ACT NOW!** Call David Eichorn* (416) 787-1712.

BATHURST / LAWRENCE
Spacious 3 + 2 bdrm bungalow on 47 x 120 ft lot. Many recent upgrades (roof, furnace, A/C, ceramic floors, ren bsmt incl nanny's quarters, nursery, rec room & office. Close to Lawrence Plaza, library, TTC. **ONLY $499,000 — ACT NOW!** Call David Eichorn* (416) 787-1712.

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HOUSES & APARTMENTS FOR RENT

- **BATHURST / LAWRENCE** 3 + 2 br bung, sep entry to huge bsmt, hrdwd floors, 2 eat-in kitchens, parkette on side & back, $3,200 / mo.
- **3000 BATHURST** Bright, spacious 3 bdrm corner unit, $2,400 / mo.
- **BATHURST / VIEWMOUNT** 3 bdrm bung steps to park, $1,995 / mo.
- **BATHURST / HILLMOUNT** 3 + 3 bdrm det bung, 2 kit, $1,500 / mo.
- **FRASERWOOD AVE** Lux 3 bdrm apt, 2 baths, balcony, $1,450 / mo.
- **BATHURST / HILLMOUNT** Cozy 2 br 2 bath det bung, $1,400 / mo.
- **AVENUE / BATHURST / LAWRENCE** 2 bdrm apartment, $1,120 / mo.

Call David Eichorn* (416) 787-1712.

*BROKER OF RECORD

5 HOUSES FOR SALE

WHEN OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS - OPEN THE DOOR! GREAT BUYS, TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE TIMES!

Arnold Ave luxury being sold at a rock bottom price and a great finance package $1,625,000 (reduced $270,000 blow out price)

Almost 6000 ft of lux+great fin bsmt on huge estate treed lot & best part of st. 3 Car gar & circular drive. Stone built, 5 bdrms & 2 in bsmt each w/ensuite. Unbelievable library panel w/built-in furn. Exqusite architecture & quality. Huge impress entertain rms. Exceptional kosher kit, granite sub zero's & more. Words won't do. **Seller will even take back an interest free 1st or 2nd mortgage up to $500,000. Now that's opportunity.**

Michael Crt. 4000 sq ft blow out price

5 bdrm home w/2 more in the loft and 2 in the bsmt. 5 baths, library, kosher kitchen, pesach kitchen, bsmnt W/o, great design, neighborhood, layout & opportunity at this price. Consider potential bsmnt apartment carries $200,000 of mortgage. Opportunity, don't miss out.

Thornhill steps to all shuls $459,000

Reno top to bottom 4 bdrm, 4 bath home has a new kit, wndws, baths, hrdwd, fin bsmt, sunken fam rm, 2 car gar. A lot of space & reno for price.

Thornhill Spring farm starter home

3 bdrm home w/finished basement, steps to shul, schools, and park. Master ensuite, hardwood floors, many upgrades, great location.

See all these homes at - www.randycohenlistens.com featured properties or call before they sell.

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HOMES

Bathurst/Lawrence – Wow! Great Starter Bungalow, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, large eat in kitchen, finished basement with income potential, 55 x 132 lot, asking $429,900

Bathurst/Wilson – building lot on quiet street, 53 foot frontage, widens to 61 at the rear, great opportunity to build a custom home, asking $479,900

CONDOS

Bathurst/Clark – "Promenade Towers" – approx. 1100 sq.ft., 2nd floor, 2 bedrooms, 2 baths, outdoor pool, tennis courts, exercise facility, 24HR security, steps to, shul shopping and buses, asking $239,000

Bathurst/Lawrence – 3000 Bathurst, 1 bedroom suite, about 860 sq.ft., parking spot, large solarium, patio, great value at $199,900

COMMERCIAL

Store For Lease – located at Bathurst & Fairlawn, complete catering operation with all equipment, Under COR supervision, great frontage for take-out operation also, call for more details.

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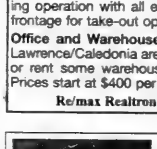

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Sales Representative

AVENUE ROAD/LAWRENCE
$1,245,000. 4 + 1 bedroom, 4 bath. finished bsmnt., family room, gourmet kitchen & private backyard.

BATHURST/LAURELCREST
$1,259,000. 5 + 2 bedroom, 5 bath. 3700 + sq. ft. custom home. Pie-shaped lot, stone front, 10' ceilings on main. Buyer to choose finishes.

BATHURST/DUPONT
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AVENUE RD/LAWRENCE
$879,000. 3 + 1 bdrm., 4 baths on 150' deep lot, sunken family room w/beamed ceilings, brick fireplace & walkout to yard, fin. bsmnt.

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Bathurst/Wilson. - Lux. 2 br., 2 bths. Indry. ensuite, walk to Yorkdale, synagogue, TTC at door. $1475./mo. 416-782-5685.

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Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. 3 br. 2 bth. furn. condo; Comm. pool, parks, close to upscale shops. Call 561-346-0727.

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Boca Pointe, 2 bdr., 2 bth., light, bright, elev. bldg., very lrge., design. furn., terr., o/looks golf. crse., 1 - 2 mos. with or w/o membership $4000/mo. 561-620-2003.

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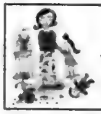

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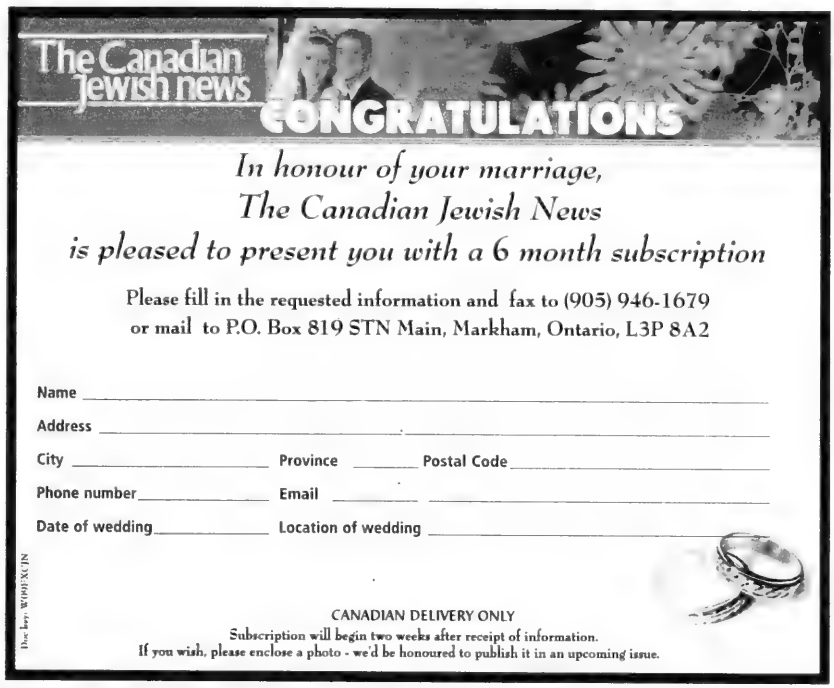

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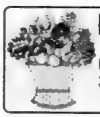

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Stars of David win gold in multicultural tournament

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The Israeli Stars of David withstood a late charge from the Polish Hussars and held on for a 4-3 victory in the title game of the Canadian Multicultural Hockey Championships.

The win in the Canadian Multicultural Hockey League's premier division – the tourney's highest level – marked the first time in the tournament's four-year history that a Jewish team won the championship. The Stars defeated last year's champs, the Hussars, and the previous year's titlists, the Irish Shamrocks, in back-to-back playoff games to claim the title.

The Stars relied on team speed and finesse, compensating for a lineup depleted by injury and the departure of two key players early in the playoffs. They were also motivated by awareness of the conflict raging in the Middle East and the desire to provide supporters of Israel with a good news story, said team coach and manager Alex Voihanski.

Paced by tournament MVP and team captain Stacey Britstone, the Stars got better as the tournament progressed, peaking during the playoffs. They finished the round robin with a 2-1-1 record, good for second in their division, before winning three playoff games in a row.

The quarter-final saw them face off with the Italian Gladiators, but "it wasn't even close," said Voihanski. The Stars won 8-3, but the result could have been even more lopsided. Though the Italians came out strong, "our speed took over. They couldn't keep up with us."

Things didn't get tighter in the semis against the Irish Shamrocks, who beat the Stars' predecessors, the Maccabbees in the title game two years ago. Again relying on speed and finesse, the Stars cruised to an 8-4 victory. "The score was pretty flattering to the Shamrocks," Voihanski opined.

Israeli Stars of David celebrate their tournament win in traditional fashion, above, while brothers Bryan, Adam and Jordan Weinberg, left, show off the championship trophy. ***[Jonah Grunfeld photos]***

The Stars' performance to that point turned some heads, with one observer writing on the Canadian Multicultural Hockey League's website: "Although it might not be considered an upset, no one expected the Israeli Stars to blow out the two-time Canadian Cup Champions Irish Shamrocks 8-4. The Israelis came out flying, despite having a shorter bench and the Irish could not get in synch after a couple of bad goals giving the Stars of David a 5-2 lead."

The final was a closer contest – at least on the scoreboard, Voihanski said. The first period was pretty even, with the Stars showing some early game "jitters" and anxiety over the absence of top forward Michael Henrich, a former first-round pick of the NHL Edmonton Oilers. Henrich joined the Stars one game into the tourney and led the team in scoring with five goals and three assists in only four games. But as GTA scout for the Barrie Colts, he had to depart after the quarter-final to evaluate players in another tournament.

Alon Eizenman, a veteran of the Israeli national team and the French pro league, stepped into Henrich's spot on the top line with Britstone and Adam Weinberg, formerly of the University of Toronto Blues, and the team didn't miss a beat, Voihanski said.

With some 600 people – divided equally between Stars and Hussars fans – watching the final at Chesswood Arena, the teams battled to a 1-1 draw after one. In the second period, the Stars picked up the pace and "started to skate, to bring the speed." Momentum shifted to the Israeli side and they took a 2-1 lead. The Hussars tied it up, but then Britstone showed why he was MVP, staking the Stars to a 3-2 lead. Jordan Weinberg, one of three brothers on the team, gave the Stars a two-goal bulge and the Hussars made it close only in the dying seconds, scoring a "garbage goal" off a scramble in front of the Israelis' net.

"We outplayed them pretty badly after the first period," Voihanski said.

Adding to the Stars' accomplishment was the fact that a key defenceman, Daniel Spivak, left before the semifinal to play for his NCAA team at the Rochester Institute of Technology, while Daniel Mandel missed the semifinal and final due to injury. Others stepped up, Voihanski said, including Ryan Goldberg, a defenceman with Stouffville Spirit and Aaron Stein, who played for the University of Western Ontario.

Britstone, who also played for Western after two years in the OHL with Plymouth and Oshawa, said the Stars youth and speed were key to the team's success. Going into the tournament "we knew we had a good team, but we didn't expect to win it, not at all," especially with key players leaving early.

Britstone, who played in last year's tournament and in the Jewish World Cup in Israel in 2007, downplayed his selection as MVP. "It's nice, of course but it more reflects how the team played," he said.

The Stars' lineup featured a number of quality players with U.S. and Canadian college experience, as well as Tier II Junior level skaters. Adam and Jordan Weinberg were joined by a third brother, Bryan, a left winger who plays with Mississauga Chargers. Ryan Goldberg and Aaron Stein were strong on defence.

Kevin Kliman, a onetime goalie with Brown University (NCAA Division I), backstopped the Stars.

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Inside Back

The blessings of music

I am not very athletic, although I do love cycling when the weather permits. During the winter, I exercise every morning at a nearby health club, with some of the time spent on a stationary bicycle. The main reason I prefer the stationary bicycle to the other "machines" is that I can read and listen to classical music while cycling. That reading is my treat of the day – the health club cycling is my excuse for reading.

Recently, I finished two wonderful books, Daniel Levitan's *This is Your Brain on Music* and Oliver Sacks' most recent tome, *Musicophilia*. The two complementary books have enhanced my understanding and appreciation of music, both personally and professionally, by looking at its potential impact on many of the conditions associated with aging.

The Senior Side of Life

I have, over the years, supported the various music programs provided to our clients at Baycrest, and have learned a great deal from our very dedicated and creative music therapists.

What the two books did for me was to coalesce what I have known informally and from clinical observation into a more cohesive understanding of music. They helped me comprehend the underlying theoretical and observed workings of music, and determine the physiological, neurological and psychological processes that govern the appreciation of and, in many cases, the need for music.

The books thus helped me understand how music can be so effective in the totality of care for many of our elderly, disabled, cognitively impaired and dependent clients.

While Levitan gives a robust and engaging understanding of the scientific underpinnings of how and why music seems to be so important, Sacks uses his vast clinical experience of medical anecdotes to illustrate the impact of music on many conditions he has been asked to consult on as a neurologist.

I have had a particular interest in dementia and other neurological and mental health disorders affecting older people, and Sacks focuses on how music interacts with individuals so afflicted.

In his chapter on Parkinson's disease and music therapy, Sacks describes his own experience with the use of music therapy for his Parkinson's patients whose disease resulted in the influenza brain infection that followed World War I. This became the basis of his book and movie of the same name, Awakenings. He eloquently describes the beneficial effects of music on the movements of many of his patients, which I have also witnessed in my own practice.

He concludes as follows: "It is music that the Parkinsonian needs, for only music, which is rigorous yet spacious, sinuous and alive, can evoke responses that are equally so. And he needs not only the metrical structure of rhythm and the free movement of melody – its contours and trajectories, its ups and downs, its tensions and relaxations – but the 'will' and intentionality of music, to allow him to regain the freedom of his kinetic melody."

Sacks also describes the benefits of music in those suffering from dementia.

Amy Clements Cortes, the senior music therapist at the Baycrest Centre, echoes his message: "Music serves as a means of communication for those where the function of language has become challenging or lost… music is processed by many different parts of the brain rather than in just one centre as in language… It is one of life's earliest experiences, and in late adulthood, musical memories remain as some of the most deeply rooted… it is important to target music… as this music is often successful in helping clients retrieve memories they would otherwise not be able to access."

Music is part of our individual and collective souls – so play on.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents *(Dundurn Press).*

GARLIC-SMASHED POTATOES

- 16 unpeeled small Yukon Gold potatoes
- 3 tblsp chopped fresh chives
- 6 lrg garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 tblsp olive oil
- 1/4 stick butter
- 1/2 c sour cream

Salt & pepper to taste

Generously grease baking dish. Cook potatoes and garlic in medium pot of boiling salted water until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes. Drain; cool. Discard garlic. Arrange potatoes close together in prepared dish. Using a spoon, smash potatoes until they split open. Drizzle with oil; dot with butter. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Preheat broiler. Broil potatoes until crisp and golden about 8-10 minutes, watching closely to avoid burning. Top with dollops of sour cream; sprinkle with chives.

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Limmud celebates all possibilities

Epi on Education

Having just returned from the Limmud Conference in England, I would be remiss in not reporting on that exhilarating experience.

Seymour Epstein

For many years now, British Jews have accustomed themselves to the fact that during the winter break, thousands of their lot assemble at a university campus outside London for four to five days of Jewish immersion. This year, there were more than 2,000 at the University of Warwick in Coventry.

Each day is filled with lectures, chevrutah study, workshops, panel discussions and concerts from early in the morning until very late at night. The topics range across a virtual rainbow of ideologies, interests, passions and lifestyles. This is true pluralistic Jewish learning and culture, in that nothing stays pareve, and every possible Jewish position of the 21st century is both represented and given full respect.

Limmud is a celebration of all the Jewish possibilities for growth and development in the time and place we currently inhabit. Go to www.limmud.org to get all the information you need, but like Coca-Cola or Shabbat, a description is insufficient to give you the real taste.

Fortunately, Toronto Jews can get that taste at Limmud Toronto 2009, on Feb. 15 at the University of Toronto's Bahen Centre, and www.limmud.ca will tell you all about that event.

One of the fascinating aspects of Limmud is the age range of participants. There were youthful singles, young families with lots of children (for whom there was constant planned activity), everyone in the middle, and many senior citizens.

All of them came to broaden their Jewish experience and deepen their Jewish knowledge. Limmud exists in 25 different countries and 45 communities. Limmud conferences in places such as Russia, Ukraine, and Turkey are a testament to the flourishing of Jewish life in the strangest of places. What excites me most about this phenomenon is that it illustrates once again how Jewish continuity is not an adequate goal for Jewish education. Rather, Jewish creativity through literacy are the correct objectives for a better Jewish future.

Epi (Seymour Epstein) is the vice-president of Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Israel: your sons are our sons

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

"Two of my three sons were called for duty, but I don't know where they are."

This is from an e-mail I received from a cousin in Israel. She and her husband have three boys, all of whom serve in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF).

URBAN WRITER

In 2006, my cousin and her husband, both olim, watched as her eldest boy went off to fight in Lebanon against Hezbollah. This time, their two other sons may be entering Gaza to fight Hamas.

"But I don't know where they are."

This part of my cousin's message was the most difficult. Her two boys are fighters and may be ordered to enter Gaza and make their way over booby-trapped bridges and battle hand to hand with enemies hiding behind children and in mosques.

Or maybe those orders won't come. She and her husband just don't know.

Just as difficult for my cousins is the fact they do know what lies in the hearts of their boys, their sensitive boys.

The Torah says Jacob was frightened and distressed by the knowledge that his brother, Esau, was coming. The commentaries say he was frightened because he might be killed and distressed because he might have to kill.

My cousin tells me she won't ask them, but she knows that her sons are both frightened and distressed for the same reasons as Jacob. What do parents do with this knowledge?

Most of us in the Diaspora have never been army parents. We're safe Jews. Our 18-year-olds won't go off this morning to fight in hell. The closest they'll get to the front is surfing their favourite Israeli websites. We're lucky, because our boys and girls are sitting in their economics classes or in their offices working the phones for another account.

Let us, therefore, use our position of safety and lend support to our Israeli family. Let us publicly and openly thank our brothers and sisters in Israel for being the guardians of our homeland and our people.

Let us express our appreciation to them for their courageous and brave decision to live in Eretz Yisrael, knowing full well that one day, their sons and daughters will be called up to fight for the Jewish people.

Let us pray for their children and always be vigilant and informed about the war in Gaza, and promise that not a moment will go by during the course of our day when they're not on our minds.

And to you our brave Israeli family, we say: "When we look at the pictures on our desks of our sons and daughters, we will close our eyes and think about your children who are in harm's way and ask God to ensure that everyone returns home safely. Your sons are our sons, and ours are yours."

To the Israeli people, we promise that we will print this line – "Two of my three sons were called for duty, but I don't know where they are" – and paste it where all of our family can read it. And when we do, we will remind ourselves to be eternally indebted to you for your ability to be strong and righteous in such daunting hours. We will remember that your boys are in harm's way for us, the Jewish people. And we will hug our children just a little bit tighter.

As I write this, Israel's first army son has just been lost to the battle: Staff Sgt. Dvir Emmanueloff, 22, from Givat Ze'ev, near Jerusalem.

Rest in peace, Dvir. Thank you!

May God watch over the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Avrum@veahavta.org. Sderot!

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EU leaders pledge to stop Hamas from rearming

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JERUSALEM — One day after Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, six key European leaders pledged to work to prevent Hamas from rearming.

The commitments were offered on Sunday at a summit in Sharm al Sheikh in Egypt and at a meeting in Jerusalem with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

The six leaders were British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek, who currently holds the European Union's rotating presidency. In co-operation with Egypt and the United States, they offered to provide troops and technological assistance to prevent Hamas from smuggling weapons and terrorists into the Gaza Strip.

The leaders expressed support for the ceasefire in Gaza and for an end to Palestinian rocket fire on southern Israel.

Olmert said that on Saturday, he received a letter from European Union leaders pledging co-operation in halting the arms smuggling into Gaza.

At the start of the Jerusalem meeting, Olmert said that Israel has no intention of staying in the Gaza Strip or reconquering it, despite its three-week offensive against Hamas in the coastal territory.

Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, centre, talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, left, and Spain's Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero, right, at Olmert's Jerusalem residence during a meeting with European leaders to discuss the situation in Gaza. *[Avi Ohayon/GPO/Flash90 photo]*

The six leaders met with Olmert following the conference in Sharm al Sheikh, where they spoke with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. During the meeting, Olmert reiterated his regret over the Palestinian civilians killed and wounded during Operation Cast Lead in Gaza.

"We did not want to hurt them or their children," he said. "They are the victims of Hamas."

None of the European leaders condemned Israel for these casualties.

Continued on page 36

Canadians largely neutral in Gaza conflict

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The majority of Canadians are solidly on the sidelines when it comes to picking sides in the recent conflict in Gaza, but of those who have chosen sides, a plurality supports Israel by nearly a three-to-one margin, according to a recent Ipsos Reid poll.

The poll found that of the 85 per cent of Canadians who have been following the conflict, 36 per cent think Canada should "take sides with Israel" rather than favouring the Palestinians and Hamas. Only 13 per cent of respondents say Canada should favour the Palestinians and Hamas. The majority of Canadians, 51 per cent, said Canada should favour neither side or they didn't know who to back.

The poll canvassed 1,000 Canadians from coast to coast and was conducted from Jan. 6 to 8.

Addressing the issue of whether Israel has used excessive or appropriate force in responding to Hamas rocket attacks, 49 per cent said the force used was excessive, while 39 per cent called it appropriate. Thirteen per cent didn't know or refused to answer.

Canadians placed responsibility for the crisis squarely with the Palestinians and Hamas. Asked who they believe "is most to blame for the current conflict," 43 per cent fingered the Palestinians and Hamas.

Continued on page 7

Va'era
Candlelighting: 4:59
Havdalah: 6:05
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Canada alone in opposing UN vote against Israel – see pages 37

The News in Brief

CANADA

Diplomats Relocated

OTTAWA — Canada's representative office to the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah has been functioning with a skeletal staff after most personnel were transferred to Jerusalem for safety reasons due to the conflict in Gaza, the newspaper Embassy reported last week. The Foreign Affairs Department confirmed the move, which an Embassy source said was taken shortly after hostilities began out of fear of attacks.

Neo-Nazis Join Rally

CALGARY — Members of the Aryan Guard, a neo-Nazi group, took part in a Jan. 10 protest in Calgary against Israel's actions in Gaza, the Calgary Herald reported. The white supremacists marched near the front of the crowd holding a modified Israeli flag that read "Terror State." Protest organizer Shadi Abuid said the neo-Nazis were told they weren't welcome, but "you can't deny people's right to walk." A spokesperson for Anti-Racist Action Calgary who was at the event said it was "unfortunate" the Aryan Guard members didn't face much opposition at the protest. The rally, which drew 1,200 people, was one of many similar ones held across Canada on Jan. 10.

WORLD

Vandals Hit Lobby

LONDON — A group of Palestinian supporters vandalized the offices of a pro-Israel lobby in London. They entered the offices of British Israel Communication & Media, a Jewish community-financed group set up in 2001 to explain Israel's position to the British media. The vandals used loudspeakers to shout anti-Israel messages and scare staff and then turned over desks, cut phone lines and threw around leaflets before running away. Police said that when they arrived, they dealt with a "suspected package, and made it safe." They are trying to find those responsible.

Yemeni Jews Moved

SANA'A, Yemen — The government of Yemen is relocating a Jewish community for safety reasons. A Jewish man from Yemen's Amran province was murdered last month, and members of the 266-person community have been the victim of verbal and stone-throwing assaults since the Israeli invasion of Gaza began, according to Yemeni press reports. The Yemeni government has allocated buildings to house the Jews in the capital of Sana'a, and also will give each of the approximately 50 families being relocated the equivalent of about $10,000. The relocation was to take place Sunday. The government said the houses and other property of the relocated Jews will remain theirs, and they can sell them if they wish.

Messages From U.K.

LONDON — Warning messages sent to the cellphones of Israeli soldiers and their families originated from the United Kingdom, according to reports. The text messages received Jan. 13 by hundreds of cellphones across Israel warned soldiers of their fate if they entered Gaza. According to media reports in Britain and Israel, checks of the code from the sender's number revealed the texts originated in the United Kingdom. Initially, it was assumed the text messages were part of Hamas psychological warfare and were sent from Gaza. The messages, sent in English, read: "Come on into Gaza. Lots of surprises waiting for your sons, the least of which is death – Hamas."

Hadassah Sheds Staff

NEW YORK — Hadassah: the Women's Zionist Organization of America has instituted massive layoffs. The organization began laying off 80 employees across the country Jan. 13, roughly one-quarter of its national staff, a spokesperson said. The cuts are at all levels. Hadassah recently said it had $40 million invested in Bernard Madoff's Ponzi scam, as well as another $50 million it thought it had made in the scheme. It was a major hit to its endowment, which now stands at $412 million (US). The layoffs, however, weren't solely caused by the Madoff losses. Hadassah had been discussing streamlining for nearly two years. The stock market downturn and the Madoff losses accelerated the process, the spokesperson said.

Islamists Threaten Madonna

LONDON — Madonna has beefed up her security with two ex-Mossad bodyguards following threats on an Islamist website, according to a British newspaper.

The People newspaper also reported Jan. 11 that the singer has instructed ex-husband Guy Ritchie to increase security for their three children. On the site, which is password protected, the extremists chatted about assassinating Madonna without referring specifically to her contacts with Israel or Judaism.

The newspaper reported that the "threat was made by Muhammad Abdel-Al, leader of the Popular Resistance Committees – a fringe group of Palestinian militia who have launched thousands of rocket attacks on Israel."

Madonna's involvement in Kabbalah is well-known, and she has visited Israel several times.

A source close to Madonna said the pop icon "is beside herself with worry, not just for her own safety but for that of the children."

JTA and British newspapers reported this month that the anti-terrorism branch of the British police warned prominent Jews to be extra vigilant and review their security arrangements. The Community Security Trust, the organization in charge of security for the Jewish community and its institutions in Britain, offered similar advice following the rise in anti-Semitic attacks since the start of Israel's military operation in Gaza on Dec. 27.

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Police asked to investigate anti-Israel protests

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

A man clutching a Hezbollah flag promising that "this is going to wipe you off the planet"; youngsters chanting in Arabic, "Palestine is ours and the Jews are our dogs"; a woman screaming hysterically at nearby counter-protesters, "Jewish child… You're going to f...in' die. Hamas is coming for you… F... off"; calls for Hezbollah chieftain Hassan Nasrallah to "strike Tel Aviv"; a demonstrator carrying a poster with the epithet "Nazisrael."

Video can be seen at cjnews.com

Those images of demonstrators, many with their faces contorted in rage, were recorded at anti-Israel demonstrations over the past few weeks in Toronto, Montreal and Calgary and have been distributed to the RCMP and local police by Canadian Jewish Congress.

Law enforcement agencies have been asked to examine the videos to determine whether the demonstrators crossed the bounds of acceptable discourse and strayed into criminal violations of anti-hate laws, spokespeople for Canadian Jewish Congress and the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC) told a news conference in Toronto last week.

The videos have been posted on YouTube and a number of blogs and can be seen at www.cjnews.com.

The events that took place on Canadian streets go far beyond Canadian norms of civility and would shock Canadians if they knew of them, said Congress CEO Bernie Farber.

The organizations that sponsored the rallies ought to "denounce the horrendous expressions of anti-Semitism and calls to genocide that occurred," he said. "It is necessary at such times for all of us to stand together and isolate hate. The law is only one instrument. It is Canadians collectively that can provide the best remedy. Only by speaking out against such vile intolerance – be you a political leader, a labour leader or an average citizen – can we truly defeat such fanaticism," Farber said.

The Canadian demonstrations coincided with protests in cities around the world against Israel's attack on Hamas in Gaza. Thousands have taken to the streets in London, Paris, South Africa and the Middle East.

Referring to those events, Farber warned that "the hateful energy we see being promulgated on our streets" could escalate to actual violence as it has in New York, London and Sweden. Synagogues in Antwerp and London have been firebombed, lit rags were pushed through the mail slot of a Jewish home in Belgium, Islamic extremists are said to have prepared hit lists of Jewish leaders in Britain, and Hamas has announced that Jewish children anywhere are legitimate targets for murder.

"And all this we believe stems from the hateful energy we see being promulgated on our streets. We do not want similar hate-filled episodes here in Canada," Farber said.

He noted that in Calgary, members of the white supremacist Aryan Guard felt comfortable marching with pro-Hamas protesters.

CIC executive vice-president Sara Saber-Freedman said shouts at a rally in Montreal referred to a battle against Jews in the seventh century and "is in effect a call for death to the Jews."

If the extreme rhetoric is not denounced by rally organizers, those protesters will feel their behaviour is acceptable. It's a moral issue, Saber-Freedman said. "This kind of rhetoric leads to violence."

The rallies were sponsored by unions and church groups, as well as Muslim, Arab and Palestinian organizations. Farber called on them to "immediately denounce those who utilize the language of hate and violence here in Canada. Each should clearly separate their organizations from such language."

Outside the news conference, sponsored by Congress and the CIC, the Jewish community's lobbying arm for Israel, a handful of protesters argued that the two organizations were attempting to distract attention from Israel's attack on Gaza.

Inside the news conference, a reporter noted that slurs came from both sides at demonstrations. Farber said if there were calls for genocide from pro-Israel protesters and something equivalent to comparing Jews with Nazis, "in a New York minute, I'd denounce it."

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Kudos for Canadian courage

From the editor's desk...

Little discussed in the commentary surrounding the abrupt unilateral declaration of ceasefire by Israel in Gaza that took effect Sunday morning was the high-level involvement of the key western nations in the European Union.

Even as details of the ceasefire were still being finalized, the EU gave its full promise to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and the government of Israel that it would assist in helping to bring stability to Gaza.

Mubarak and French President Nicolas Sarkozy jointly chaired a summit meeting at Sharm el Sheikh on Sunday at which they publicly prescribed the only possibility of peace in Gaza.

Sarkozy, of course, re-emphasized his belief in a two-state solution as the only means to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "We should continue and we should accelerate our efforts in order to achieve a settlement based on the creation of two states, a Palestinian state living side by side with an Israeli state that has the right to its security," he told reporters.

But insofar as the Gaza component of the solution is concerned, he added: "We have pledged to help Israel and Egypt with all the technical, military, naval and diplomatic ways to help end the smuggling of weapons into Gaza."

In this the French president was not alone. The day before, according to Ha'aretz, on Saturday, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown offered the services of Britain's navy to help prevent arms smuggling into Gaza.

In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel's office released a statement indicating that she, Brown and Sarkozy had sent letters to Israeli and Egyptian leaders expressing a willingness to take a series of concrete measures to combat arms smuggling. The paper reported that Merkel had expressed support for the efforts of the Israeli and Egyptian governments to reach a lasting ceasefire in Gaza.

Earlier in the week, of course, the United States and Israel signed a mutual assistance pact also regarding the prevention of arms smuggling into Gaza.

On Sunday evening, six European heads of government made what was described as "a lightning visit" to Jerusalem to very visibly, very demonstratively, lend their support to the ceasefire process and, what is more, to pledge their active assistance in making it work, that is, in preventing Hamas from re-arming.

Reading very clearly and definitively between the lines of these very high-profile demonstrations of commitment and support from the European leaders was the unexpressed but brazenly obvious assertion that Hamas cannot be trusted to desist from smuggling arms.

And underpinning the entire edifice of that distrust and of the accompanying sense of urgency is the open knowledge that the Hamas rulers have made Gaza a satellite of Iran and an instrument of Iranian foreign policy.

The radical Shia Islamist regime threatens Israel to be sure, but it also threatens Egypt and the other western-looking Sunni regimes in the Middle East. As a result, the shadow of Iranian mischief and menace falls troublingly across Europe as well.

The Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center in Israel reported last week that "Iranian leader Ali Khamenei is personally involved in directing the strategic support provided to Hamas by Iran. That support in a practice is overseen by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Quds Force, headed by Qassem Suleimani and by Iran's ministry of intelligence and Security, headed by Mouhsen Hussein Azahi."

During the Sharm El Sheikh press conference, Sarkozy made a remark that deserved much greater emphasis. He said that the Gaza violence was *part of a worldwide conflict* (my emphasis). He was clearly referring to the conflict between the democracies, and indeed all peace-loving nations of the world and radical, Islamist terrorism.

One of the democracies that has unambiguously and courageously taken a stand against the threat posed by international terror is our very own Canada.

Canada was the only country among 47 to oppose what the government called a "deeply flawed" resolution against Israel at the United Nations' Human Rights gathering in Geneva last week.

"A lone voice of integrity," was how Toronto Star columnist Rosie DiManno described Canada for its principled stand against a motion that abusively singled out Israel and made no mention whatsoever of Hamas for human rights violations. Thirteen countries, mostly European, abstained, while 33 countries supported the vile motion.

Last week Jason Kenney, minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism, reinforced this message of integrity when he visited the Chabad House in Mumbai. "The fact that people would come all the way to India to target a Jewish community centre indicates the depth of hatred and evil, of anti-Semitism in the [garb] of Islamist terrorism," Kenney said.

The government is to be commended.

It is one of the leaders in the fight against the forces of terror and extremism – Iran, Al Qaeda and their proxies - who target the "corrupt" West and who see Israel as the vanguard of the hated West in a Middle East that they are determined to make *Judenrein*.

– ***MBD***

JOE TOURS ISRAEL: Joseph Wurzelbacher, right, dubbed "Joe the Plumber" by Republican candidate John McCain during the recent U.S. presidential campaign, visited the Jewish Agency's Kalanit Absorption Center in Ashkelon last week as part of a tour of Israel to report on the situation in the south for the website PajamasTV.com. Wurzelbacher toured the centre, which had suffered damage from a Katyusha rocket, and met with a group of young immigrants from South America and the former Soviet Union. Kalanit is home to some 200 new immigrants, ages 17 to 30, from around the world who are learning Hebrew or pursuing academic degrees. ***[Jewish Agency for Israel photo]***

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Petition calls on CUPE to reject ban of Israeli academics

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

More than 3,700 academics at universities around the world have signed a petition calling on members of CUPE Ontario, Ontario's largest public service union, to reject a proposal to ban Israeli academics at Ontario campuses.

"The proposed ban clearly represents ethnic discrimination and the proposed ideological litmus test is a violation of free speech," states the petition, which is sponsored by Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (SPME).

"To show our solidarity with our Israeli academics in this matter, we, the undersigned, hereby declare ourselves to be Israeli academics for purposes of any academic boycott. We will regard ourselves as Israeli academics and decline to participate in any activity from which Israeli academics are excluded."

The petition was initiated by Ontario members of SPME and submitted to the organization's U.S.-based headquarters, said Sergio Grinstein, professor of biochemistry at the University of Toronto. With some modifications, it appeared on the SPME website (www.spme.net), and within four days, 3,500 academics had signed on. Its goal is 5,000 signatures.

SPME calls itself "a grassroots community of over 20,000 university and college professors, researchers, administrators, teachers, librarians and students on more than 1,500 campuses worldwide." Their goal is "a world in which Israel exists as a sovereign Jewish state within secure borders and her neighbours achieve their legitimate peaceful aspirations."

Grinstein, who also serves as senior scientist at the Hospital for Sick Children, said "colleagues in Israel and around the world are appalled by what is going on."

He was referring to a proposal by the Ontario wing of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) to ban Israeli academics from Canadian campuses because of a military attack by Israeli forces on the Islamic University in Gaza. Israel defended the attack, saying two labs in the facility were used by Hamas' military wing for research and development of explosives and that rockets and explosives were stored in the building.

CUPE Ontario stated the boycott resolution was requested by the Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees and was advanced by CUPE Ontario's university workers committee. It will be brought before the union's annual conference for deliberation.

Last week, CUPE Ontario president Sid Ryan backtracked from the union's original position after a widespread wave of criticism, which included a pointed rebuke from a broad range of Canadians, including CUPE's national office, editorial writers and CUPE members. He was also widely taken to task for saying the Israeli attack on the university was like "what the Nazis did."

Ryan apologized for that remark, and then last week, he modified his original statement, saying "the proposed international boycott will focus on Israeli academic institutions, not individuals.

"An academic boycott should focus on issues of investment, partnership, fundraising and joint projects," he said.

Ryan's announcement came one day after Paul Moist, CUPE national president, stated that "none of CUPE's over 2,000 chartered bodies – including CUPE Ontario – have adopted such a resolution. I believe such a resolution is wrong and would violate the anti-discrimination standards set out in the CUPE constitution. I will be using my influence in any debates on such a resolution to oppose its adoption."

While critical of the CUPE Ontario resolution, Moist went on to condemn both the Hamas rocket attacks on Israel "and the Israeli government's disproportionate response."

Also last week, the Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies urged Moist and CUPE Ontario's membership to call for Ryan's resignation, saying that "a series of blatantly anti-Semitic and discriminatory acts and comments by Mr. Ryan… cast doubt over his ability to lead the Ontario section of Canada's largest union."

Meanwhile, a second large public service union weighed in on the issue with a call on the federal government to condemn Israel's "military assault on the people of Gaza."

Denis Lemelin, national president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) called on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to push for "cessation of the ongoing Israeli siege of Gaza, which has resulted in the collective punishment of the entire Gaza population."

Calling the Israeli attack a "massacre of people in Gaza," Lemelin urged the government "to adopt a program of boycott, divestment and sanctions until Israel recognizes the right of the Palestinian people to self determination and complies with international law."

In other developments, Toronto District School Board (TDSB) trustee Josh Matlow moved a resolution before the TDSB's programs and school services committee that would require CUPE local 4400, representing Toronto education workers, to comply with board directives to avoid expressing partisan viewpoints on the Mideast conflict. The motion also called for a letter to be sent to Ryan expressing the TDSB's disapproval of his comparison of Israel to the Nazi regime and his support for an academic boycott.

Matlow said the motion will be on the TDSB's agenda at its Feb. 4 meeting.

STUDENTS BACK ISRAEL

More than 1,000 people braved the cold weather and the snow on Sunday to gather at Dundas Square in Toronto to show their support for Israel one day after it declared a ceasefire in Gaza after a three-week war waged in an effort to stop rocket attacks into Israel. Those who took part in the rally, which was organized by students of the Canadian Centre for Israel Activism, Hasbara Fellowships and Hillel of Greater Toronto, proudly waved flags, prayed for peace and celebrated the ceasefire.

[Simone Gervais photo]

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CORCA

Canadian agencies gets $2.3M from Claims Conference

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Canadian social service agencies have been allocated $2.3 million (US) by the Claims Conference to help Holocaust survivors in Canada this year.

Canada is one of 43 countries that will receive a total of $168 million (US) in assistance in 2009.

"In these times of severe crisis for Jewish philanthropy, the need for the Claims Conference funds for social services is even more essential to the well-being of elderly Nazi victims," Claims Conference chair Julius Berman said last week in a statement.

He added: "The Claims Conference is committed to addressing the growing needs of Nazi victims as they age and to easing, as much as possible, the lives of elderly Nazi victims in their last years."

Officially known as the Conference of Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, the Claims Conference was established after World War II to recover proceeds from unclaimed Jewish property in what was then East Germany and to administer social service grants from the German government.

The organizations in Toronto due to receive grants are Baycrest ($455,000), Circle of Care ($887,891) and Jewish Family and Child ($255,267).

Also in line for funds are Jewish Family Services of Ottawa ($40,000) and the Jewish Family Service Agency of Vancouver ($155,000) and the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre ($16,500).

The allocations in Canada will be used for home care for the house-bound, as well as medical assistance, food programs, transportation, emergency cash grants and socialization programs.

In an interview, Greg Schneider, CEO of the New York-based Claims Conference, said Canadian organizations will receive $100,000 more this year than in 2008.

"In these depressed economic times, with Jewish philanthropy in crisis, [we] felt it was important to maintain and even increase funding for survivors," he noted. "Seventy years ago, the world abandoned these Jews, and today, we cannot abandon them again in their last years when they need so much."

The Claims Conference provides a wide range of services, including:

- In-home services that help survivors with such activities as housekeeping, bathing, dressing, laundry and shopping;
- Service programs that enable a variety of agencies to provide such services as home care, money management and meals on wheels;
- Expanded services in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Mexico.

* * *

The Claims Conference also announced this month that it has allocated more than $400,000 to assist survivors in areas of southern Israel under rocket attack from the Gaza Strip.

Gaza crisis blamed on Palestinians, Hamas

Continued from page 1

Only 18 per cent said the Israelis were more to blame and 39 per cent said neither, or didn't know or would not answer.

Canadians were also asked whether they supported the creation of a Palestinian state. Forty-two per cent of those following the issue favoured that position, while 35 per cent were against it. The remainder didn't know or refused to answer.

John Wright, senior vice-president of Ipsos Reid public relations, said Canadians understand the defence needs of Israel, but at the same time "there is a belief that Israel's response has been excessive. Twelve hundred [Palestinians] have been killed in the conflict on one side and six on the other side… When 1,200 people are caught in the middle, the poll showed that tempers people's views."

Those casualties, he said, "are a mitigating factor" in the support for Israel.

Wright said the poll is consistent with findings following two earlier conflicts. In 2002, at the height of the second intifadah, 48 per cent of Canadians supported neither side, while 16 per cent backed Israel and 12 per cent the Palestinians. In August 2006, during the Lebanon war, 19 per cent blamed Israel for the war and 47 per cent blamed others in the region.

While a plurality of Canadians support Israel, at 36-13, the margin "is pretty thin," he added.

Moshe Ronen, chair of the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC), the Jewish community's advocacy arm on Israel, had another take on the poll.

"People following the current conflict understand that Israel is defending itself in the most civil way possible against a most uncivil enemy, Hamas," he said. "People realize that the threat of Islamic fundamentalism is the kind of threat Canadians worry about and that this battle is part of the international war against terrorism.

"Canadians realize Israel faces challenges in terms of defending its citizens." They saw Israel absorb attacks and they respect the restraint shown by Israel despite thousands of missiles fired at it. "Canadians are on board and fed up with the Palestinians' failures to choose a leadership to take advantage of the opportunities given to them," he said.

Ronen said Canadians are likely also influenced by the position taken by the Canadian government, which has been supportive of Israel, as well as the favourable comments by Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff, who condemned the Hamas rocket attacks, called for an immediate end to those attacks and affirmed Israel's right to defend itself.

LITERACY WINNERS

Students at United Synagogue Day School's Beth Tzedec campus competed in the Royal Canadian Legion Literacy Competition in the categories of essay and poetry, with their thoughts on "Remembrance." Pictured, from left, are winners Kelly Simpson, first place, poetry; Yona Strauss, second place, poetry; Carly Shiff, first place, essay, and Marni Elman, third place, essay.

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Fighting ends, for now

As of this writing, the war in the Gaza Strip has stopped. For now. After a special motza'ei Shabbat convening of the cabinet, the government of Israel unilaterally declared a ceasefire that took effect at 2 a.m. Sunday.

True to form, Hamas responded with a final volley of 17 more missile and mortar rounds aimed at the civilians of southern Israel. Then it acceded to the ceasefire.

Bombastically and with the silly surrealism of an emperor wearing no clothes, Khaled Meshal, the Hamas leader headquartered at a very safe remove from the fighting in Gaza in the Bashar Assad protectorate of Damascus, announced that Hamas will halt all military activity and give Israeli troops one week to pull out of the Gaza Strip, demanding, too, that Israel end the blockade of the Hamas government and open the border crossings.

The Israel Defence Forces will maintain a presence in Gaza until the nature of Hamas' actions, if not its intentions, toward Israel becomes clearer over the next few weeks.

Mark Regev, the spokesperson for Israel's Prime Minister's Office told the world that Israel "clearly does not want to" stay in Gaza, but that the Jewish state, nevertheless, would do everything it needed to maintain the calm. "If in fact we see a cessation of Hamas activity towards Israel, then we could see a long-term ceasefire," he told Sky News.

As Prime Minister Ehud Olmert himself pointed out, the IDF will continue to operate in Gaza if Hamas continues to target Israeli citizens.

Despite contrary pronouncements, it's not clear whether all of Israel's military objectives were achieved by the war. After all, Hamas was able to launch rockets and mortars into southern Israel and beyond, throughout the three-week military campaign. Some smuggling tunnels undoubtedly escaped damage. And young Gilad Schalit's whereabouts, let alone his health, remains a mystery (although, in truth, his rescue was not among the specific pre-war military objectives).

To be sure, Israel achieved a significant military victory. Hamas leaders were caught off guard by the fury and resolve of Israel's response. The terrorists' capacity to harm Israel has been significantly impaired. Moreover, Hamas and any other like-minded terrorist groups will surely pay heavy regard in the future to the likelihood of punishing Israeli retaliation for attempts to harm Israelis.

Israel's decision to unilaterally declare a ceasefire was no doubt also influenced by non-military factors, such as the key involvement of Egypt (as well as Saudi Arabia in the non-spotlighted background) in working with Europe and the United States to try to find viable solutions to stopping weapons smuggling through the tunnels; sensitivity to international criticism concerning the number of civilian deaths in Gaza, and the imminence of the Obama inauguration.

For the Gaza operation to have reached a true ending, the West must join the fight against Islamist terrorism. Time will tell if, as the circumstances of last week's ceasefire suggest, it has and if, as a result, peace will finally come to the people of Gaza and Israel.

25 years ago in The CJN

Israel rejected a proposal by Jordan's King Hussein that the Palestine Liberation Organization be included in peace talks. This was in accordance with the king's statement in 1974 that called the PLO the "sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinians."

Dry Bones BACK IN 2009
MR. HISTORY:
AFTER EIGHT YEARS OF MISSILE ATTACKS FROM GAZA, ISRAEL SAID...
ENOUGH!
TO WHICH THE REST OF THE WORLD SAID...
NOT ENOUGH!

Editorial Advisory Board: **Guy Aboodi, Michael Brown, Donald Carr, Gal Corfas, Igor Korenzvit, Keith Landy, Rabbi John Moscowitz, Lou Ronson, Alan Sandler, Rabbi Philip Scheim, Mike Shriqui, Pamela Medjuck Stein, Ehud Telem, Rabbi Reuven Tradburks, Nelson Wiseman.**

Where were our brothers and sisters?

On Jan. 4, I, a Holocaust survivor, along with 14 brave members of Amitie Quebec-Israel, including several courageous non-Jews, stood up against the Palestinian Solidarity demonstration that was held in front of Israel's consulate here in Montreal.

The pro-Palestinian demonstrators endured the cold weather in order to powerfully scream their anti-Israel and pro-Hamas propaganda. Their demonstration was well attended by about 1,000 people, and well organized – and well covered, of course, by the media.

Where were our brothers and sisters? Shamefully, they chose the warmth and pleasantry of their homes. I am extremely sad and embarrassed that they chose to stay home and not to come out in support of the embattled State of Israel. And, unlike Jewish communities in other major cities – Paris, London, Brussels and even Germany – this passivity continues. We have not had a major public demonstration in support of embattled Israel. Where are our "leaders," religious and communal?

Baruch Cohen
Montreal

Editor's note: Amitie Quebec-Israel is a non-profit association that aims to fight misinformation concerning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and strengthen the ties between the people of Quebec and the people of Israel.

* * *

Olmert gov't has done something right

With the retaliatory military invasion to rid Gaza of Hamas, the Olmert-Livni-Barak government has finally done something right and, as such, it to be highly commended for this. However, let's not forget that the past strategic track records of these three incumbents comprise, by and large, numerous colossal, dismal policy failures. They include then-Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak's panic exit of the military occupation of South Lebanon in 2001, which enabled Hezbollah to fill the resulting vacuum (Hezbollah ultimately wreaked havoc on the northern third of Israel in the 2006 Second Lebanon War with thousands of missiles), and the Kadima government's misguided 2005 unilateral withdrawal from Gaza. To quote the Jerusalem Post's editor Caroline Glick, "If Israel had not withdrawn its military forces from Gaza and forcibly expelled 8,000 Israeli citizens from their homes and farms in September 2005, it would not be fighting this war today."

Neville Woolf
Toronto

Dry Bones INDEPENDENCE
AFTER FACING EIGHT YEARS OF HAMAS ROCKET ATTACKS FROM GAZA WITH A BIBLICAL...
"LOVE THY NEIGHBOR"
ISRAEL SWITCHED TO A TRADITIONAL AND HISTORIC AMERICAN POSITION...
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CUPE should call for Ryan's resignation

I believe it is the duty of Canadian Union of Public Employees as a national Canadian union to demand the resignation of Sid Ryan, the president of its Ontario wing. Ryan's proposal, which he brought to CUPE's membership, to ban from Canadian university and college campuses all Israeli academics – and by implication, all Jews or any other supporters of Israel – who will not publicly toe his party line on the Middle East.

His proposal's blatantly discriminatory character opposes everything CUPE stands for, not to mention that it is an encouragement of further racism and anti-Semitism. In my judgment, his calling for and putting forward this proposal morally disqualifies him from participating in civil discourse in Canadian public life and should prevent him from being involved in any academic affairs at any Canadian university as a representative of CUPE. By his call for a boycott of Israeli academics and Israel supporters on campus, he has compromised his union's ability to be trusted as a body that respects the very existence of free academic institutions. There is no room for bigotry, anti-Semitism, and hatred in Ontario or in Canada, and especially on its university and college campuses.

Kenneth Hart Green
Toronto

* * *

Gaza offensive

If the Israeli occupation was half as brutal as the Palestinians allege, they surely would have done everything in their power to ensure that Israel did not re-occupy Gaza after leaving it unilaterally. Instead, the Palestinians did everything they could to make sure that Israel did re-occupy Gaza. The offensive in Gaza is not the first time that Israel has left territory, only to return in response to Palestinian terror.

Michelle Moshelian
Givatayim, Israel

* * *

CJN should reflect Israel's side only

There are not two ways of looking at Israel's Gaza offensive ("Jews demonstrate on Palestinian side," CJN letters, Jan. 15). Your paper should reflect only the righteous side, which is Israel.

Jack Kopyto
Thornhill, Ont.

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Perspectives

A short history of 'disproportionate force'

By SETH FRANTZMAN
Special to The CJN

Within hours of Israel launching massive air strikes on the Gaza Strip in response to Hamas' firing of more than 100 rockets at Israel over three days, the international community was already reverting to form in its complaints that Israel was using "disproportionate force."

On Dec. 27, not long after Israel began striking Hamas police stations and terrorist infrastructure in Gaza, the European Union condemned Israel's "disproportionate use of force."

This cycle of terrorism, Israeli reactions and condemnations of "disproportionate force" is common in the Middle East. In July 2006, the United Nations' chief humanitarian officer, Jan Egeland, complained that Israel had used disproportionate force in Lebanon. On July 13, the European Union also claimed that Israel was using such force. On July 27, the prime minister of Turkey did the same, regarding Gaza. Matti Vanhanen, prime minister of Finland, also said the same thing. In 2004, then-UN secretary general Kofi Annan complained that Israel must stop using "disproportionate force in densely populated areas."

Israel isn't the only country that's been accused of using disproportionate force. During its war with Georgia in 2008, Russia was also accused by the United States and NATO of using disproportionate force.

Where did this idea that disproportionate force is wrong come from? Do western nations and leaders that complain about such use of force really live up to such preaching in their own countries? What is the history of the use of disproportionate force in war?

One of the problems with the term disproportionate force is that it has no accepted definition in international law or elsewhere. In "Sense and nonsense about disproportionate force," George Fletcher, a law professor at Columbia University, wrote in 2006 that had Britain bombed Buenos Aires during the Falklands War, "in that context [bombing] would have been unnecessary and, therefore, could not possibly qualify as proportionate."

However, he notes that whereas criminal law deals with proportionate force in self defence, international law has never dealt with this question. "I know of no case in the international version of shooting escaping looters where a court has affirmed that the use of force was necessary, but not proportionate."

In response to Washington's condemnation of Russia's use of force last year in Georgia, Dmitry Rogozin, Russia's ambassador to NATO, said that "the use of force to defend one's compatriots is traditionally regarded as a form of self defence," and he claimed that NATO and the United States had used disproportionate force in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

A casualty of a Grad rocket attack on Ashkelon earlier this month.

But this brings us no closer to what constitutes disproportionate force or if it should even be considered wrong. Proportionate force, in theory, should be proportional to the threat. Thus, shooting unarmed thieves by a civilian is considered wrong. Police are accused from time to time of using too much force when taking down criminals.

But no one claims that directly proportionate force should be used by civilians or the authorities. Thieves don't need to be punished by having people steal from them. Rapists aren't raped. Hostage-takers don't have their families taken hostage. No one would logically think that Hamas' rocket fire from Gaza should be countered with equally indiscriminate rocket and mortar fire by Israel.

The history of warfare shows that it has never been fought in a proportionate manner. Winning wars requires not being proportional. Consider World War II. The American army at the end of the war numbered some nine million men under arms. The United States was churning out more planes and tanks in a month in 1944 than the Germans were making in a year. The Soviets massed some 20,000 tanks before the battle of Berlin in 1945.

Other examples: during the first Gulf War, the Americans used disproportionate air power to crush the Iraqi army. In the NATO campaign in Kosovo in 1999, NATO employed more than 1,000 planes against a Serbia that had virtually no air force. When Gen. Ulysses S. Grant brought the full might of the Federal army to bear on the U.S. South in 1864, his soldiers outnumbered Confederate fighters by two to one, and more in almost all battles.

Hardly proportionate.

But it's in law enforcement that we see the greatest use of disproportionate, but necessary, force. One criminal with a handgun can result in the arrival of dozens, if not hundreds, of officers to a crime scene. In a 1997 North Hollywood shootout, two armed bank robbers shooting at police resulted in the arrival of 300 law enforcement officers, 13 of whom were eventually wounded by the robbers.

Disproportionate force is the way crime is prevented and criminals are brought to justice. It's also the way wars are ended. All the great causes of history, such as the abolition of slavery or the desegregation of the American South, were brought about by the use of disproportionate force. (In the latter example, the U.S. National Guard was used to secure rights for black Americans.) Nazism would not have been defeated had the Allies relied on proportionate force. Proportionate force is a recipe for unending war and the endless victimization of civilians at the hands of terrorist aggressors. Fighting crime – as with terror and Nazism – requires disproportionate force.

Seth Frantzman is doing his doctorate in at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His articles have appeared in the Jerusalem Post, Middle East Quarterly and the Tucson Weekly. He lives in Jerusalem.

An IDF unit operating in the Gaza Strip found a cache of rockets and grenades in a mosque last week.

A Grad rocket fired from Gaza exploded in a kindergarten in Ashdod earlier this month causing extensive damage to the building, but no direct injuries at the school. The school was empty at the time of the attack. [*Israel photos*]

Opinions

Rabbis for Human Rights deserves support

Those promoting a symbiotic relationship between Israel and the Diaspora argue that each is essential for the other. Israel strengthens Jews throughout the world in their sense of being part of a vibrant and resourceful people that despite constant challenges is a beacon of hope to us all.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

In turn the Diaspora, particularly in western countries, promotes democracy and human rights based on the ethical foundations of Judaism and its stress on responsibility for the other. That's its contribution in the world and its way to help Israel remain a Jewish and a just society.

This was very much in evidence when earlier this month Rabbis for Human Rights in Israel held a conference to celebrate 20 years of existence. Most of those present were born in the Diaspora and trained in the liberal traditions of Reform and Conservative Judaism. Their commitment to Zionism brought them to Israel, but their Jewish outlook has its roots in the Diaspora. They promote the symbiosis.

It's a non-political and interdenominational association that seeks to alert the Israeli public to human rights abuses of its Jewish and Arab citizens, as well as of the rights of Palestinians in the territories. Because it co-operates with other like-minded groups, Jews who espouse right-wing politics are often prone to describe Rabbis for Human Rights as naïve, subversive and working against Jewish interests.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The organization is rooted in the teachings of Judaism that stress the divine imperative of justice and love of neighbour. Much of its work is in the realm of education. However, not to imprison themselves in the ivory tower of self-righteous preaching, members also engage in actions against, say, wanton destruction of Arab homes, abuses of human rights in the territories, discrimination against individuals and groups within Israel and a host of similar injustices.

Its most visible public face is its executive director, Rabbi Arik Ascherman, who with courage and determination has put himself in the firing line of verbal abuse, police action and even military intervention. Knowing full well that a relatively small group of non-militant rabbis, however articulate and well-intentioned, cannot effectively stand up to authority, he's determined to be a witness in the best prophetic tradition. He perceives his work as reflecting the very core of Judaism.

The presence of Rabbis for Human Rights makes a difference in Israel. It reminds the population not only of the teachings of Judaism, but also of the stated intentions of the founders of the Jewish state. It, therefore, pays considerable attention to the study of Israel's Declaration of Independence and its implementation in our time.

Rabbis for Human Rights has earned our unstinting support.

Anti-Israel or anti-education?

With the outbreak of violence in the Gaza Strip, Israel is starting to take heat in the public sphere. Its refusal to accept a hollow peace agreement from a terrorist organization has given it more detractors. And along with the negative press, we are beginning to notice a growing trend that promotes hate toward Zionists, Israelis and the entire Jewish population.

Justin Dahan in Ottawa

In recent years, Canadian university campuses have not been friendly toward Israel, and many have hosted anti-apartheid weeks and been the site of anti-Israel demonstrations. But now CUPE Ontario is going one step further with a proposed a ban on Israeli professors.

Sid Ryan, the union's president, made the following statement earlier this month: "In response to an appeal from the Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees, we are ready to say Israeli academics should not be on our campuses unless they explicitly condemn the university bombing and the assault on Gaza in general."

Ryan made his comments in light of Israel's recent bombing of the Islamic University in Gaza. Israel said Hamas terrorists had been using the university's laboratories for weapons research and to store munitions.

The proposed ban has yet to be drafted, but CUPE's plan is to have it ready for a vote at a February conference. If the vote passes, the only way an Israeli-born academic would be allowed to teach at a university that adheres to the boycott is if he or she denounces Israel's actions in Gaza.

Would it be rational to force an American professor to denounce the occupation of Iraq because groups of people view the Iraq war as wrong? That would never happen in our society.

Protests against Israel are one thing, even when they feature unfavourable and offensive terms such as "apartheid state." But this crosses a line.

This is a clear case of discrimination. CUPE, the largest university workers union, wants universities to decide whom to employ based on political affiliation and birthplace. What happened to freedom of speech? A university is supposed to be a collection of intellectuals presenting opinions. CUPE's proposal runs counter to such an open environment. It is censorship of the highest form. It's also a way to prevent students from learning about Israel from a pro-Israeli viewpoint.

Moreover, in publicly condemning support for Israel, CUPE is supporting opposition to Israel, thus siding with a terrorist organization – Hamas.

It should not come as a shock to anyone to learn that CUPE is hindering education yet again. CUPE local 3903 has been holding York University hostage for most of the academic year with a teaching assistants' strike that has the potential to cancel the entire year for thousands of students.

Perhaps instead of focusing an entire union's efforts on banning Israeli-born professors, CUPE should get back to what's important – namely, education. Playing political games only hurts students. CUPE is denying York students an education, and now it's attempting to prevent qualified professors from working in Ontario.

This clear violation of human rights needs to be quashed before it can be allowed to happen. We can't permit censorship based upon political affiliation with Israel. It is, quite simply, a bigoted policy that should not, and cannot, be accepted.

Bombing Gaza university was a bad idea

Whether you're for the war or against it; whether you think Hamas is a terrorist organization or Israel an occupying power, and whether you see the light of peace at the end of the tunnel or an endless cycle of violence, speak up. Please.

Jesse Mintz in Halifax

Exercise the one measure of control an individual has over a conflict that's so much larger than any one person: express yourself. Talk to anyone who might listen – teachers, parents, children, friends and family – even if they don't agree with you, and especially if they don't agree with you, for it's most often through disagreements that we learn.

Apathy does a great disservice to democracy. So voice an opinion – any opinion – and make yourself heard.

With this in mind, I come to this month's column. As a Jewish student, the conflict in Gaza touches me in much the same way as it does any other Jew in Canada who is removed from the fighting.

We don't need to worry about Qassam rockets hitting our cities or friends and family in the military. We do, however, need to satisfy our consciences – to act according to our own moral compasses in our criticism or support of Israeli measures and, by doing so, act as ambassadors for the Israeli people.

The avenues are plentiful and the debate ongoing, as are the opportunities available to the general public through protests and editorials in newspapers, and to students on politically charged university campuses.

And yet there's one issue that seems to demand students' attention, perhaps more so than the general public's: last month's bombing of the Islamic University in Gaza.

It was targeted in six air attacks, and Israel holds that it was used as a storehouse for Hamas arms. But many analysts, including some writing for Ha'aretz in Israel, dismiss these claims and say the university was bombed as much for its cultural and symbolic association with Hamas as for its military one.

While its political and cultural symbolism has been emphasized in the media, little has been written of its value as an educational institution. Until its evacuation at the outset of the conflict, the university served as the foremost institute for secondary education in Gaza, educating nearly 20,000 students, mostly women. The university has 10 faculties, ranging from art and commerce to information technology and Shariah law, and it confers both bachelor and master's degrees.

Last summer, the closed and limiting world of the Gazan Palestinian became international news for a brief moment as Israel denied exit permits to seven Palestinian students who were awarded Fulbright fellowships by the U.S. State Department to study in the United States. Only after U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged the Israeli government to permit the students to leave did Israel do so, although, even then, only four of the seven were allowed passage through the bureaucratic red tape.

Gazans are barred from either entering Israel or crossing into the West Bank to study, further limiting their university access. In light of the restrictions on Gazans' travel – checkpoints and borders impede Palestinian movement at every turn – the already obvious importance of the Islamic University, Gaza's oldest university, becomes magnified.

The language used by newspapers around the world lauding Israel's decision to allow the Fulbright scholars to leave last summer made popular sentiment clear: it was perceived as a victory for both Israeli society and the students involved. Education was recognized as giving students hope for personal betterment while simultaneously stimulating Palestinians to make peace with Israel.

Such sentiment was as true then as it is now. The moral outrage over academic freedom stemming from CUPE Ontario's proposed boycott of Israeli academics earlier this month should with equal and unequivocal weight condemn the destruction of the university in Gaza.

Peace won't be found in the rubble of a former seat of learning. It will be found only in the return of normalcy to the lives of both Gazans and Israelis. The establishment of schools is but one aspect of this, one that will help foster prosperity in Gaza.

An injustice has been perpetrated against Palestinians who depend on the Islamic University for their dreams of social mobility and economic progress. More than this, however, an injustice has been perpetrated against Israelis who, cognizant of the Palestinians' plight, seek to provide equitable terms for peace.

The Kirshner File

George W. Bush's record on Israel

In a year-end piece in the New York Times in 2008, columnist Bob Herbert wrote that the majority of Americans would be glad to say good riddance to the 43rd president of the United States, George W. Bush, who vacated the White House this week after eight years in office and was replaced by the first African-American president, Barack Obama. Blasting Bush's foreign and domestic policies, Herbert observed, "This is the man who gave us the war in Iraq and Guantanamo and torture and rendition; who turned the Clinton economy and the budget surplus into fool's gold; who dithered while New Orleans drowned; who trampled our civil liberties at home and ruined our reputation abroad..."

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

It's clear that Bush left a legacy of anger and distrust, but in Israel he was highly regarded. On Bush's first official visit to Israel last January, the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, hailed him as Israel's "strongest and most trusted ally." As he put it, "Your policies have reflected a basic understanding of the challenges facing Israel in this troubled region and a solid commitment to our national security."

In a speech to the Knesset during that visit, Bush solidified his reputation as one of the most pro-Israel of presidents. "The alliance between our governments is unbreakable," he declared, saying it is guided by "clear principles and shared convictions" that will not be affected by "popularity polls" or "shifting opinions of international elites." Praising Israel as "a light unto the nations," Bush said that Israel could always count on the United States "to be at your side."

Revisiting Israel several months later during its 60th anniversary celebrations, Bush reiterated America's commitment to the Jewish state, noting the United States was "proud to be Israel's closest ally and best friend."

Not surprisingly, Bush stuck by Israel in his final days as president, as the current war in the Gaza Strip unfolded. His administration accused Hamas of having provoked hostilities by breaking the six-month ceasefire and continuing to fire rockets at Israel, agreed that Israel had acted in self-defence and called for a durable and lasting truce. In yet another demonstration of loyalty, the United States vetoed a one-sided Libyan resolution at the United Nations.

Washington, however, supported a call by the Quartet of Middle East peace brokers – the United States, the United Nations, the European Union and Russia – for an immediate truce and abstained on a resolution, proposed by Britain, France and Arab states and passed by a 14-0 margin, calling for "an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire."

The Israeli government was disappointed by Washington's decision not to veto the UN resolution altogether, but Israel could take solace from the fact that the Bush administration had, in effect, given Israel still more time to press its ground invasion of Gaza. Lest it be forgotten, Washington adopted a similar position during the 2006 war in Lebanon, when Israeli forces fought Hezbollah.

Bush, a born-again Christian, was predisposed to Israel from the outset. On his first-ever visit to Israel in 1998, when he was governor of Texas, he was taken on a helicopter ride of the country by the then-foreign minister, Ariel Sharon, who sought to impress upon him that Israel could ill afford to make sweeping geographical concessions to the Palestinians. Bush formed a close bond with Sharon and described him as "a man of peace" after he became Israel's prime minister.

As Bush campaigned for the presidency, he spoke to key members of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, an influential lobby based in Washington. In comments that would define his attitude to Israel, Bush said that the United States and Israel had "a special friendship" and asserted that his support of Israel was "not conditional on the outcome of the peace process."

Bush, in the aftermath of the Islamist terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, placed the Arab-Israeli conflict on the back burner and concentrated on defeating the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Suggesting that his predecessor, Bill Clinton, had spent too much time trying to forge peace between Israel and the Palestinians and Israel and Syria, Bush refrained from appointing a permanent special envoy to the Middle East.

Instead, following the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising in 2000, he dispatched two emissaries to the region – George Tenet, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Anthony Zini, a former U.S. general – in what proved to be a futile effort to broker a ceasefire. Yet he did not promote Israeli talks with Syria.

The Bush administration severed relations with the president of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, after Israel intercepted the Karine-A, a ship carrying Iranian weapons and munitions to the PA. Like Israel, the United States boycotted Arafat. Nonetheless, Bush's first secretary of state, Colin Powell, criticized Israel for launching raids into Gaza in response to the first Qassam rocket attacks.

Bush and Ehud Olmert in Jerusalem last year
[Avi Ohayon/GPO/Israel Sun photo]

Despite his antipathy to Arafat, Bush was the first American president to explicitly call for a Palestinian state within the framework of a two-state solution. But as he said in a landmark 2002 speech, the Palestinians required a leadership that was "untainted by terrorism." With Arafat's death and his replacement by Mahmoud Abbas, the United States reopened its relationship with the PA and resumed financial aid to the Palestinians.

Bush embraced the 2003 "road map" peace plan, which set out the terms for a resolution of Israel's conflict with the Palestinians. But the initiative crumbled because the United States did not exert sufficient pressure on both sides to fully abide by its conditions.

In 2004, in one of his most significant speeches on the Middle East, Bush tacitly recognized Israel's claim to several settlement blocs in the contested West Bank. As he put it, "In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centres, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949."

Alongside this statement supporting Israel's refusal to return to the pre-1967 borders, the United States chided Israel for expanding settlements in the territories, building in disputed eastern Jerusalem and tolerating unauthorized outposts. Washington also asked Israel to ease its restrictions on the lives of Palestinian civilians in the territories and advised Israel to build its new separation barrier along the border rather than inside the West Bank. Bush's second secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, worked to revive the road map. But the 2007 Annapolis agreement turned out to be a dead letter, notwithstanding Olmert's claim that a lot of progress had been made in Israeli-Palestinian talks.

Bush, in keeping with his commitment to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge over the Arab states, approved a $30-billion aid package to Israel over 10 years, allowed Israel to buy state-of-the-art F-35 fighter jets and deployed an advanced radar system in the Negev, manned by American personnel, to guard against a potential missile attack by Iran.

But while Bush pledged that he would never permit Iran to acquire a nuclear arsenal, he declined to sell Israel a new generation of bunker-busting bombs or let Israeli aircraft overfly Iraq in case Israel decided to bomb Iran's nuclear sites.

He portrayed the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq as a victory for democracy in the region and as a gift to Israel's security. But given the resultant chaos in Iraq and the empowerment of the Shiite community, Iran has managed to increase its influence in Iraq, a development that Israel views with great concern.

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Jewish Toronto

Over 5,000 attend Toronto rally in support of the people of Israel

UJA, partner agencies mobilize community on behalf of Southern Israel

By Barbra Green and Daniel Horowitz

In an overwhelming display of solidarity and pride, the Jewish community of Greater Toronto gathered Thursday, January 8 for a massive rally in support of the people of Israel.

The Rally for the People of Israel and Freedom from Terror was organized by UJA Federation with the support of its partner agencies and dozens of community sponsors.

Braving the bitter cold and traffic-snarled streets, over 5,000 people poured into Beth Tzedec Congregation on Bathurst Street, filling the sanctuary and banquet hall and spilling into overflow rooms equipped with large video screens broadcasting the event. A host of other Jewish communities across Canada – including Montreal, Halifax and Hamilton - gathered for simultaneous rallies, watching the program via closed-circuit television.

"We stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in Israel," said community leader Julia Koschitzky, the evening's emcee, referring specifically to the men, women and children of Sderot and other southern communities, who continue to be victimized by unrelenting Qassam rocket attacks fired by Hamas terrorists. "We understand that Israel had no choice," she said to a rousing ovation, one of many on the night. "There is only so much a people and a land can bear before they reach a breaking point."

The first speaker of the rally was Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl of Beth Tzedec who delivered an impassioned *d'var torah*. Amir Gissin, the Consul General of Israel to Toronto followed, stressing how important this show of support was to the Jewish state and to "the war over public opinion."

"This war is almost as important as the war on the ground," said Gissin. While he is optimistic that Israel is winning that battle, he encouraged all present at the event and watching from coast to coast, to continue the fight by writing letters to the editor, staying informed and spreading the word.

Arguably, the most enthusiastic response from the audience came during comments from the Honourable Peter Kent, Minister of State Foreign Affairs and MP for Thornhill.

"Tonight, I am here, we are here, to stand with Israel," said Kent to a roaring crowd. "Canada maintains that these rocket attacks are the cause of this current crisis, and we support Israel's right to defend itself against the continued attacks by Hamas."

Kent reiterated the federal government's desire for an enduring and sustainable ceasefire that would allow Israel and her neighbours to live in peace and without fear of attack. His words of understanding and solidarity sent hundreds of Canadian and Israeli flags waving throughout the sanctuary.

Other politicians who attended the rally were The Honourable Joseph Volpe, MP for Eglinton Lawrence; David Zimmer, Parliamentary Assistant to the Attorney General and MPP for Willowdale; Josh Matlow, Toronto District School Board Trustee for St. Paul's; James Pasternak, Toronto District School Board for York Centre and David Cohen, Richmond Hill Councillor.

"Whether we are from Toronto, Hamilton, London, Ottawa, Montreal, Halifax, Winnipeg, Calgary or Vancouver, we want to express our appreciation for the supportive positions adopted by the government of Canada and the liberal opposition," said Koschitzky.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, at 3:45 a.m., a live satellite broadcast from Be'er Sheva brought the war home. Together with Yossi Tanuri, Director General, United Israel Appeal Federations Canada (UIAFC), a number of brave and tired Israelis gathered at a school recently bombed by Hamas, to tell their stories and discuss the fear, resilience and harsh realities of life in Israel today.

The new Mayor of Be'er Sheva, Rubik Danilovich, spoke of the incredible spirit and hope expressed by the students who recently visited their damaged classroom. Then there was Yehudit Recanati, who spoke about Natal – a program that funds mobile trauma units throughout Israel to provide much-needed psychological counselling to thousands of citizens. And there was Tamar Ben-Avram, the stoic mother of Raz, a soldier fighting in Gaza, who discussed how life must go on in the face of unrelenting uncertainty and fear.

The broadcast concluded with a surprise pre-recorded video message from Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert who sent his heartfelt thanks to those participating in the rally for "expressing solidarity, especially with the people of Sderot."

The final speaker, former Consul General of Israel in New York, Alon Pinkas, provided valuable insights and analysis of the ongoing conflict. Pinkas placed the war in the broader context of the Middle East as well, stating that "if we defeat Hamas, we inflict defeat on Iran," since they share the same fundamentalist, intolerant, anti-democratic ideology. He predicted that a resolution to the conflict will happen within six weeks of United States President-elect Barack Obama taking office and reiterated that Israel has no desire to re-occupy Gaza.

"At the end of all of this there will have to be a political process, not with Hamas, but with the Palestinians," said Pinkas. "We are going to have to find a way to coexist; otherwise we are doomed for another 100 years."

"This rally showed Jewish Toronto's true *ruach* and passion for Israel and its people," said UJA President and CEO, Ted Sokolsky. "More than 5,000 Canadians came out to show their support for the Jewish State and to say to terrorists that 'enough is enough'. Imagine having to endure eight years of unrelenting rocket attacks; rockets falling in your backyard or through the roof of your house, when all you're doing is just trying to live your life, and raise your family. Finally, Israel reached a breaking point, a breaking point where its citizens can no longer live under these conditions. Rallies across Canada and around the world help get that message across, a message of hope for the rights of all citizens to live their lives free from the scourge of terrorism."

(See rally photos on opposite page)

(Photo by Avraham A. Witty)

Over 5,000 people participated in the recent Rally for the People of Israel, held at Toronto's Beth Tzedec Congregation. The overflow crowd took part in the rally from special rooms set up in the shul, equipped with audio and video capabilities.

Looking for ways to help Israel?

Here are two great ways to do just that:

1. Write to your member of Parliament:
Visit tinyurl.com/writeyourmp to send a letter to your MP asking for their support of Israel.

2. Donate to UJA's Southern Israel Relief Fund:
Participate in this critical initiative to help provide services such as trauma counseling and safe after-school youth programs by donating at ujadonations.com/southisrael

They came to Rally for Israel

(Photos by Avraham A. Witty)

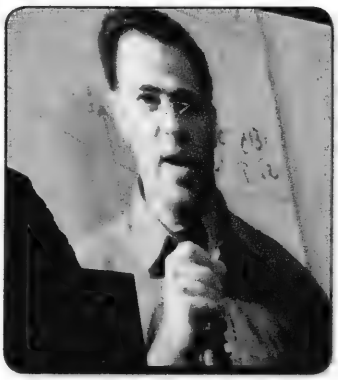
Rally emcee Julia Koschitzky

Israeli PM Ehud Olmert brings greetings to Toronto via a taped message.

Keynote Speaker, Alon Pinkas

The Honourable Peter Kent

Over 5,000 people filled Beth Tzedec Congregation to rally for Israel.



United Israel Appeal Federations Canada Director General Yossi Tanuri hosts a live satellite broadcast from Israel.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl of Beth Tzedec delivers a d'var torah.

Consul General of Israel, Amir Gissin (l) chats with The Honourable Peter Kent, Minister of State Foreign Affairs and MP for Thornhill.

Hillel students Yoni Halpern and Miryam Spiegel read prayers for Canadian and Israeli soldiers, and for the state of Israel.

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The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

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Pray for the soldiers of the IDF

By RABBI YEHIEL BEN AYON

At this time, it's impossible to think about much else but Israel. It's my fervent prayer that by the time these words go to print, their contents will no longer be applicable, that the mission in Gaza will have already been concluded successfully and will have put down – for now, if not permanently – the terrorism emanating from Gaza.

Through A Sephardi Window

The following is part of an address (taken from notes) made during the Yom Kippur War in 1973 in the Mirrer Yeshiva in Jerusalem by the then rosh yeshiva, the late Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz.

"The Babylonian Talmud, in Bava Batra (10b) makes a passing, almost cryptic mention of 'the martyrs of Lod.' Of them, and in particular of their station in the world to come, the Talmud states, 'No creature is able to stand in their place.' Who were these martyrs of Lod and what did they do to merit such a statement, placing them in rarefied and highest echelon of the heavens?

"Their time in history was a difficult one, when Israel found itself under the Roman commonwealth. The leadership then was under the infamous and evil Turnus Rufus. Apparently, his daughter, missing for some time, had just been found murdered. The incensed Turnus Rufus quickly and conveniently concluded that the blame for this crime rested none other than with the Jews, in particular those living in the vicinity of Lod.

"A standing army soon stood in siege around the city waiting for the orders to avenge her death. They were ready to utterly destroy Lod and all of its innocent, but ill-fated inhabitants. All that would be gained by this senseless slaughter was that the rage of a madman would perhaps be somewhat abated. Just then, two young men, brothers Louliannus and Papus, stood up to profess their guilt and to turn themselves in.

"The mad totality of Turnus Rufus' livid fury was quickly unleashed on these two hapless souls. They were tortured by means beyond comprehension or human imagination, until such point in time that death itself was merciful. Louliannus and Papus were, of course, wholly innocent and in no way implicated in the murder of Turnus Rufus' daughter. Their only motive in making themselves scapegoats was to protect the poor people of Lod from the madness of Turnus Rufus. For their ultimate and selfless sacrifice, the Talmud testifies that 'of their station in the world to come, no creature is able to stand in their place.'"

From this episode, Rabbi Shmuelevitz concluded that if this was the reward for those who protects others, that is how we should view the soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces, who go to battle and place their lives on the line to defend our people in Israel. He continued by imploring his listeners that it's a responsibility of the highest order to offer our many and heartfelt prayers on behalf of the soldiers of the IDF, prayers for quick and decisive success in their mission, that they should be returned soon to their homes, to their mothers and fathers safely, and that they do so alive and in full health.

Modern media open a new frontier

With the exception of a smattering of letters to the editor, newspapers are media 1.0 – one-way media. The journalist writes, the reader reads and, on occasion, may comment on the article around the water cooler or at the dinner table. That's where the conversation usually ends.

Class Act
By Daniel Held

Notwithstanding the scores of e-mails I've received in the last few weeks asking me to write letters to the editor commenting on the war in Gaza, these letters are rarely written. In the event that a letter is printed, the time lag between the publication of the original article and your comments often dulls the point of the argument.

For my generation, the media battle surrounding the war in Gaza has left the newspaper behind and moved to more fertile pasture.

Enter media 2.0. This form of media is international, instant and interactive.

Search for Israel on YouTube and you will find more than 200,000 videos. The top hit, Let's Play Pretend, originates from Israel, was uploaded 10 days ago and has already had over 100,000 views. With the click of a button I can e-mail it, embed it on my own website, share it through Facebook or MySpace. The video has garnered hundreds of text comments and even video responses – each of which is public, expresses a strong opinion, and was published instantly – a far cry from the letter to the editor.

The Israel Defence Forces recently created its own YouTube channel offering videos directly from the front, regular updates from IDF spokespeople and a history of the situation in Gaza. These videos have received hundreds of thousands of views from around the world, bringing information, for the first time, directly from the IDF to the public. Bypassing the reporter, the IDF is able to offer its message without the added lense of a journalist.

Reading the news has also changed. Google News automatically searches 4,500 news sources simultaneously. Type in Gaza, and over 20,000 articles appear from media outlets in Texas and Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates. The breadth of perspectives is a far cry from the days of having one newspaper delivered to my home each morning.

In an attempt to reach out to Media 2.0, the Israeli Consulate in New York recently held its first Twitter news conference. Twitter is an online service that allows people to communicate, in 140 characters or fewer, what they are doing, thinking, etc. In the news conference, twitterers from around the world asked short, but poignant, questions of the Israeli consul, who answered in "Internet speak," using abbreviations and slang.

In the last two weeks, the Israeli Consulate has posted nearly 200 updates on the war, the situation in Israel and even the safety of Birthright Israel participants. Over 4,000 people subscribe to the consulate's feed, instantly receiving every update.

With media 2.0, reading and responding to Israel's war in Gaza has changed. News is immediate, comes from multiple sources, and is interactive. Using YouTube, Twitter and other outlets, Israel has led the way to advocacy over Media 2.0, but it is not enough.

The key to this new media lies in its democratic nature and its viral spread. Anyone can post anything. There is no longer an editor to select which letters to publish. Rather, in the world of Media 2.0 any voice that wants to be heard, can be heard. And it spreads. In seconds, thousands of e-mails, links and twitters can spread the word about any survey, video or article.

If, on the PR front, Israel's wars are won and lost in the media, Media 2.0 has opened a new frontier in the battle, requiring a new generation of strategies and soldiers.

Religious feminism

Books
Bernard Baskin

New Jewish Feminism – Probing the Past, Forging the Future. **Edited by Rabbi Elyse Goldstein, Jewish Lights Publishing.**

In this provocative and timely book, 37 feminists: rabbis, cantors, scholars, congregational leaders as well as chaplains from the United States, Canada and Israel address the varied and complex issues that confront Jewish women.

The authors of the articles reflect the views of the Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, Reconstructionist and Jewish Renewal movements.

In her foreword to the volume, Anita Diamant (well-known as the author of The Red Tent) indicates that this is the first time in Jewish history that women's voices have been added to the public discourse about everything: about God and Halachah, about the governance of our synagogues, about marriage and how we educate our children, about our money, about the substance and fire of our lives.

For Diamant, feminism is nothing less than a profound expression of Judaism's mission and part of the Torah's mandate for justice and the sanctification of life.

The book organizes its material into seven main areas: theology; ritual and Torah study; the synagogue; Israel; gender, sexuality and age; the denominations; and leadership and social justice.

It wasn't until 1972 that the Reform movement ordained the first female rabbi. The Conservative and Reconstructionist movements eventually followed suit. But the response of Orthodoxy has been more cautious and much slower.

Sara Hurwitz who serves as religious mentor in an Orthodox synagogue, writes, "There is no doubt that the advent of women in rabbinic positions has already [caused] and is likely to continue to cause a stir within the Orthodox community. Some even suggest that it will cause a major split in the Orthodox movement. If this were to happen, I believe that the modern Orthodox movement would be making great strides to sustain itself as a distinct and vibrant movement."

One widespread concern about the growth and influence of religious feminism is that many male congregants prefer not to attend services led by women. Liberal synagogues have experienced a growing phenomenon of some men simply not showing up.

A review of enrolment figures for Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, the Reform rabbinical seminary, indicates the ratio of female-to-male first-year rabbinic students is now approaching 70 percent women to 30 percent men. The figure of 80 percent female and 20 percent male is often quoted when it come to the expected attendee demographics at a local temple adult education program. Although the synagogue used to be dominated by men and reinforced patriarchal authority, in liberal circles, it is now often characterized by men's absence. Whether this problem will grow or become less acute in the future, as women's role in synagogue life becomes more normative and as younger congregants engage in synagogue practice, remains an unresolved question.

This broad-ranging compendium is edited by Rabbi Elyse Goldstein, director of Kolel: the Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning in Toronto. She is also the editor of several other volumes dealing with feminism and the Jewish tradition and a CJN columnist.

In her introduction, she emphasizes that the book is meant to spur discussion, intended to open up a dialogue between the early Jewish feminist pioneers and the young women shaping Judaism today.

Well-planned, readable and informative, this multi-voiced collection should be read by everyone concerned with Jewish life, the changes it is undergoing and how it will be practised by both men and women in the future.

Google Maps' eye on Israel

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Anyone watching television coverage of the conflict in Gaza and southern Israel will be struck by the high quality graphics and, in particular, the detailed satellite maps of the region. This may come as a bit of a surprise because just a few years ago, online users of Google Maps became accustomed to seeing crisp aerial shots of many inhabited regions of the world – but not Israel. And the accepted reason: sharp photos of sensitive military sites would assist Israel's enemies.

At the time, the Internet was rife with theories about who was responsible – or to blame – for the fuzzy photos: Google or the Israeli military or the American government. Nowadays, the images are clearer, and some people are concerned.

If you're not familiar with these maps, here's a short primer. Google actually provides two map display products, both free. Google Maps is web-based – type in an address or city or landmark and you are immediately presented with a map of the region. Click on a tab and you are presented with a satellite perspective that you can zoom in on to allow remarkable clarity. **[maps.google.com]** Google Earth is similar, but as a downloadable program it offers even more powerful tools displayed on a virtual globe. **[earth.google.com]** Both can be incredibly handy when you're looking for an address or planning a trip.

So what kind of risk do they pose, if any? Jerusalem-based blogger Charles Levinson has reproduced aerial shots of the Dimona nuclear reactor freely available via Google. He then quotes Yediot Aharonot's Alex Fishman. "The State of Israel, with its sensitive installations, has lost another scarf veiling its charms. If up until now we were undressed only by the superpower satellites, then now, with the improvement in the quality of satellite images from Google Earth, Israel's most secret spots are becoming visible not only to any ephemeral intelligence organization – but to any Internet surfer." **[tinyurl.com/googmap 03]**

In a fascinating October 2007 print and video report from the Guardian, reporter Clancy Chassay accompanied Palestinian militants as they fired a rocket from Gaza into southern Israel. When Chassay returned with them to their headquarters, the group's commander in Gaza, Khaled Jaabari, told him, "We obtain the details from Google Earth and check them against our maps of the city centre and sensitive areas." Jaabari then showed Chassay how he used an aerial image of Sderot to search for targets. **[tinyurl.com/googmap07]**

Around the same time, the San Francisco Chronicle quoted one expert who said these new images do not endanger Israel's security. "Israel has had 10 years to prepare for this," said Prof. Gerald Steinberg of Bar Ilan University and a CJN columnist, who helped draft an agreement with the United States limiting satellite resolution imagery. "They are not real-time pictures, and they were not taken yesterday. I don't think this is a major change in security." **[tinyurl.com/googmap09]**

One of the best articles I've read on this controversy was written by David Shamah in the Jerusalem Post. In Security & Secrets at Google, Shamah suggested that Google's improved images still don't match those provided for other countries. Aside from that, they are a couple of years old, and "one would also imagine that terrorists interested in such high-resolution images of Israel's strategic sites would have already procured a copy of these detailed, 'top-secret' images long before the less-sophisticated versions of them made it to Google Earth." **[tinyurl.com/googmap10]**

Concerns about Google maps and security aren't limited to Israel. The New York Times recently reported that "Mumbai terrorists relied on new technology for attacks [and] recognized their targets and knew the most direct routes to reach them in part because they had studied satellite photos from Google Earth." **[tinyurl.com/googmap04]** A case has been launched in a Mumbai court to compel Google to blur sensitive areas in that country. **[tinyurl.com/googmap05]**

If you want to see what Google does blur or blot out around the world, the relevant Wikipedia entry lists everything from the Oconee Nuclear Station in South Carolina to Soestdijk Palace, residence of the Dutch Royal Family. **[tinyurl.com/googmap08]** The list does not currently include any blurred sites in Israel or the Middle East.

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@ rogers.com.

שיאר ג'ינג'ו

גידי קורן וחברים

המלחמה הזאת

שָׁבָת עשרים ושביעי בדצמבר, שתים עשרה בצהריים, אני במוזיאון תל אביב עם נכדיי, שם מתקיימת הצגת הבכורה של מחזמר הילדים שלי ושלמה ארצי "הטיל לארץ התנים". מתיקות חנוכה באויר. באותן שניות ממש מפציץ חיל האויר במכת פתע עשרות מטרות בעזה, ומוחק במחי יד את כל בוגרי קורס הקציינים הראשון של חמאס שעומדים במסדר קבלת הדרגות. המלחמה הזאת, שזוכה לקונצנזוס רחב מאוד בישראל, היא, אם תרצו, המשך ישיר למלחמת המכבים- על זכותם של יהודים לחיות בארצם ללא התנכלות של טרוריסטים. מטבע הענין אני מבקש להקדיש את "שישאר ביניהם" למספר מחשבות ואסוציאציות שמביאה המלחמה הזאת.

הרב עמוס נתנאל

אין ספק בלבי שהאנשים האמללים ביותר בישראל בימים אלה הם אנשי צוות הטנק ובניהם התותחן, שירו את האש הידידותית שהרגה את חיילי גולני. על רקע זה, הופעתו של הרב עמוס נתנאל, אביו של יוני ז"ל שנהרג באותה תקרית, היא גילוי מדהים של שאר רוח ואצילות. יכול היה הוא, כפי שעושים רבים בתנאים אלה, לומר דברים קשים על התנהלות הצבא והחלוות בחיי אדם. לו היה עושה זאת- היה מוסיף לכאבם של החיילים שקרו ומקטין את סכויי ההחלמה הנפשית שלהם. מה עשה הרב? מיותרנו הוא התקשר לצוות הלוחם ואני מצטט את דבריו, שנורמים לי עיניים לחת גם ברגע כתיבת שורות אלה:

"אנחנו אוהבים אתכם ומחבקים אתכם. אתם עושים ימים כלילות מתוך גבורה ומסירות למען העם והארץ. אני מדבר בשמי, בשם מלכי, אמו של יוני, בשם צינה אשתו, מעיין הקטנה בת שלושת החודשים ובשם האחים יצחק, שרי ודוד. הפגיעה מאש כוחותינו היא חלק בלתי נפרד מכל מלחמות ישראל ומהיכולת שלנו להכריע את שדה הקרב. יוני יצא למלחמה הזאת, ואנחנו כהורים שלחנו אותו לקרבות האלה. לא אתם פגעתם ביוני."

בעשותו כך החזיר הרב נתנאל חיים לאנשי צוות הטנק, ובכך הפך את הדבר הנורא ביותר שקרה לו למקור אנרגיה חיובית. אינני יכול להעלות בדעתי מעשה יותר נשגב.

גולדה מאיר

בימים אלה, בהם מנסים אנשי התאמאס לפגוע באוכלוסיה האזרחית בישראל, בעוד שצה"ל עושה הכל כדי לא לפגוע באוכלוסיה אזרחית בעזה, בימים שבהם התאמאס מתחבא בבתי ספר ובין משפחות פלסטינאיות-מהדהדות מילות החכמה של גולדה מאיר:

"אנחנו יכולים אולי לסלוח לערבים על שהרגו בילדינו, אך איננו יכולים לסלוח להם על שהם נורמים לנו להרוג את ילדיהם. יהיה שלום עם הערבים רק כשהם ילמדו לאהוב את ילדיהם יותר מאשר הם שונאים אותנו."

אני מציע-לכולנו לצטט משפט זה באויר כל גוי שמדבר איתנו על המלחמה בעזה.

ואלס עם באשיר

הגיע לטודונטו הסרט הישראלי המצליח ביותר בכל הזמנים "ואלס עם באשיר". זהו סרט פוליטי מצויין, ז'אנר שהתחיל ממש רק בשנים האחרונות, ובמרכזו זכרונותיהם של חיילים ישראלים ממלחמת לבנון הראשונה, ומהטבח של סאברה ושתילה. ראיתי את הסרט ביום שבו הוא זכה בפרס "גלובוס הזהב" והתרגשותי היתה כפולה: גם על כך שסרט ישראלי יכול להגיע לרמה גבוהה כל כך, וגם על תכני הספציפי, חכמתו ורגישותו. על פי דרכו מראה הסרט את חולשה של הדמוקרטיה הישראלית, שמאפשרת לחציו את זוועת המלחמה בלי כחל וסרק. את סרטו של ארי פולמן אסור לאף ישראלי להחמיץ. עשר בסולם קורן.

Cancellation of CAJE conference saddens educators

U.S. organization is downsizing

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Seymour Epstein, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's senior vice-president for education, was saddened along with other Canadian educators to hear that a major Jewish educational organization is cancelling its annual conference and significantly downsizing.

CAJE, the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education, is cancelling its annual conference because of ongoing financial difficulties, the organization announced earlier this month.

The conference has been the central professional development resource for supplementary and Hebrew school teachers since CAJE was founded 33 years ago.

The federation's Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education, headed by Epstein, offers training for Jewish educators in Toronto, but "we couldn't ever replace CAJE," said Epstein, a founder of the New York City-based organization.

Lee-Ron Shulman – who is involved in both formal and informal education as a teacher at Associated Hebrew Schools and as youth director at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation – said the recent development is "the loss of more than just another conference," because CAJE brought together educators from all sectors and denominations of the Jewish community "in a safe and caring atmosphere."

In 2007, there were 10 Canadians among approximately 1,200 participants at the conference.

At the time, Anne Andrew, principal of the religious school at Vancouver's Temple Sholom, told The CJN that she had attended almost a dozen CAJE conferences to connect with educators from across North America.

Although she did not attend last summer's conference, one of her teachers participated.

"I feel one educator from each supplementary school should go," Andrew said. "We're going to miss it tremendously. We really relied on it for boosts of energy and enthusiasm every summer."

Epstein, who attended last summer's conference in Burlington, Vt., noted that relatively few Canadians were there, particularly among day school educators. CAJE "primarily deals with supplementary education," he noted.

However, those who attended "always benefitted," both from the "rich content" and the context of spending several days with such a large group of Jewish educators, Epstein added.

After much speculation over its future, CAJE's executive director, Jeffrey Lasday, made the announcement Jan. 9 in a mass e-mail message.

"As you are aware, this is a very difficult time for Jewish not-for-profit agencies in general and it is also an especially tough time for us at CAJE," Lasday wrote. "Due to the current dramatic economic downturn coupled with the financial constraints faced by our members' organizations, congregations and schools, the CAJE leadership has had to face the inescapable conclusion that CAJE can no longer offer our distinctive services to the field, and that we will be unable to convene the CAJE conference in 2009."

Seymour Epstein

Organizing the conference, which was set to take place in San Antonio this summer, has been the organization's primary function, and as a result CAJE will also need to fire significant staff, Lasday wrote. Last year its conference drew some 1,500 Jewish educators.

Already CAJE has laid off the director of the conference, David Frank, and its director of development, Mimi Mark.

The organization is now in discussions with the Jewish Education Service of North America about filling the vacuum in professional services left by CAJE's downsizing.

With files from JTA

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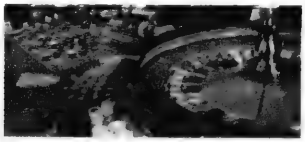

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Israel's case has been fairly presented

"Israel's diplomats know that if journalists are given a choice between covering death and covering context, death wins."

That was the harsh but coldly realistic assessment of New York Times reporter Ethan Bronner, writing about the Israeli government's refusal to allow foreign reporters into Gaza ("Israel Keeping Reporters From Close Look at War," Jan. 7.)

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Bronner wrote: " Israelis say the war is being reduced on television screens around the world to a simplistic story: an American-backed country with awesome military machine fighting a third-world guerrilla force leading to a handful of Israelis dead versus 600 Gazans dead.

"Israelis and their supporters think that such quick descriptions fail to explain the vital context of what has been happening – years of terrorist rocket fire on civilians have gone largely unanswered, and a message had to be sent to Israel's enemies that this would go on no longer, they say. The issue of proportionality, they add, is a false construct, because comparing death tolls offers no help in measuring justice and legitimacy."

So the government made the decision, wrote Bonner, "to keep the news media far away from the death."

As many analysts have pointed out, Hamas is using its people as human shields, increasing the civilian death toll as part of its propaganda war against Israel. Hamas provides no shelters for Palestinian civilians. Many of the images coming out of Gaza are of heart-rending civilian casualties – often children. These are being supplied by Arab media intent on making Israel look as wantonly brutal as possible.

But despite these negative factors, Israel has found support in Canadian newspaper editorials and opinion pieces, and on radio interview shows.

On CBC Radio's Sunday Edition (Jan. 11), Israeli writer Yossi Klein Halevi explained at length and with great passion to host Michael Enright the terrible dilemma that Israel faces fighting Hamas, a fanatical Islamist organization whose dedicated goal is the destruction of Israel, no matter what the cost to its own civilians.

Klein Halevi also provided wider regional analysis in the Globe and Mail ("Clock's ticking toward an Iranian bomb," Jan. 10.) He explained that Hamas in Gaza, like Hezbollah in Lebanon, is acting as a beachhead for its sponsor, Iran.

Klein Halevi pointed out that Iran's quest for nuclear arms has made for new – and surprising – Middle East allies: "Shared dread of a nuclear Iran has helped create the first tacit alliance between Israel and Sunni Arab states. So desperate are some Arab leaders to forestall an Iranian bomb that they have, in effect, sided with Israel against Iran's proxies in the Arab world."

Editorials in Canada's leading newspapers have almost uniformly, and often eloquently, underscored the basic principles of this conflict: Israel has the right, under international law, to defend itself against Hamas' aggression.

For example, the Jan. 6 Globe and Mail lead editorial, "Measured action on the ground," noted the predicament facing Israel: "It is true that many more Palestinian than Israeli civilians have been killed in the current conflict. But the government of Israel, like that of any other nation-state, is answerable above all for the safety of its own people; it cannot acquiesce in violent deaths by rocket attack. By such an invasion, the [Israel Defence Forces] can greatly diminish the number of such killings, but cannot prevent them all."

Most recent (as of this writing) was the Jan. 10 National Post editorial "Moral Clarity on the Middle East." The Post commended Liberal party leader Michael Ignatieff and Peter Kent, minister of state for foreign affairs, for acknowledging that "Israel is justified in its campaign to defend itself from Hamas rocket attacks."

This column cannot begin to cite all of the positive editorials and opinion pieces in the Canadian media, as well as the numerous quotes from Israeli officials and analysts in news stories. To be sure, the Palestinian side has been amply presented throughout, and in ways – with emotion-laden imagery on TV – that might seem overwhelming.

Still, overall, Israel's case has been covered fairly.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

On cjnews.com

Readers comment on ongoing conflict in Gaza:

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Economics major founds an employment service for arts grads

By RIVA GOLD
Special to The CJN

After dozens of papers, scores of sleepless nights and countless cups of coffee, thousands of students graduate with bachelor of arts degrees every year. For many of them, their job prospects are less than ideal.

As someone who recently faced this reality, Lauren Friese founded TalentEgg, a service that matches up recent arts graduates with meaningful entry-level positions. "We basically provide the services a campus career fair used to," the 25-year-old says.

"My arts degree was kind of a hard sell," says Friese, who completed her degree in economics from Queen's University in 2005. "When I graduated, I really didn't know how to get into the workforce."

"Many companies look for specific educational backgrounds, but the fact is, a large majority of students study things like history or politics. It's hard for employers to see how degrees like that translate into actual jobs."

Friese considers herself a huge advocate for the value of an arts degree.

"There is a massive group of students ignored in the recruitment of entry-level talent," she says. For her, arts degrees promote crucial "soft skills," including information dissection, problem solving, meeting deadlines and time management.

"Any program at an accredited university offers a certain standard of teaching and has certain expectations of their students. What you prove in university is your aptitude – it doesn't matter what specifically you studied," she adds.

After her undergraduate degree, Friese decided to pursue a master's degree from London School of Economics (LSE) in economic history. At the school, Friese networked with her international peers and soon after landed a rewarding entry-level position.

"In London, there were several websites to help students transition from school to work. I used one successfully to find a job in a small consulting firm," she says.

Jennifer Swales, left, and Cassandra Jowett, two TalentEgg summer interns, sit in their office known as the "Egg Carton."

"When I moved back to Canada, I found that there really wasn't a resource like that here. We're way behind."

Friese had always been a self-proclaimed "Internet geek," with an interest in web trends. "I saw a system that worked so well in the U.K. that it was obvious I'd have to do that here," she says.

In April, she started TalentEgg to mirror the job-finding programs that worked for her in the United Kingdom. The company works exclusively with arts graduates and employers to find suitable matches, free of charge.

TalentEgg also educates employers about how to recruit suitable applicants.

"Canadian employers put too much emphasis on recruitment through job fairs or connections. Students aren't looking there. A lot of bright, talented students are just going online," she says.

Friese and her co-workers also work with recent graduates, and encourage them to think of job interviews as sales jobs.

"The interview is like selling yourself as a product – your human resource talents, your drive. Focus on how your background benefits the workplace," Friese says.

"Your resumé can't just be a list, either. Make it a sales document emphasizing the benefits you can bring to the job. You really have to paint a picture for them.

"The key is not to draw lines between your prior experience in academia and the job at hand. What you actually want to do is just promote your core skills," she says.

For Friese, she learned to stop focussing on what she learned while working at the clothing store the Gap and instead explained that she worked at the Gap so that she could afford to study at LSE.

Another important piece of advice: students should network before they graduate, she says.

"Anyone who has signalled to the world they want do something in university ends up in something interesting and challenging."

"In my Queen's bubble, everyone brought something to the table. Surround yourself with good people."

Running TalentEgg has been challenging for Friese, who has no formal background in business.

"I read a lot of books on marketing and sales, and online tutorials about how to do my accounting," she says. "Business tactics can be learned, though, but being driven and persistent is what you really need to make things work."

As a former arts student, Friese uses her lack of business training to her advantage.

"I think it allows me to come up with more creative ways to solve problems. On the other hand, I also just surround myself with fantastic people that have lots of experience," she says.

Lauren Friese considers herself an advocate for the value of an arts degree and works to match recent arts grads with good jobs.

So far, TalentEgg has worked with close to 4,000 students and more than 100 employers.

Aside from her business, Friese also speaks at career events and writes articles about soft skills and recruiting. She sits on the board of the Ryerson University liberal arts program and is involved with a "women in IT" group.

Speaking to large audiences, Friese often draws upon her own experiences.

A few weeks ago, she spoke at the annual Conference Board of Canada about the role of Generation Y in the coming years. She highlighted the importance of hiring arts graduates in light of the looming baby boom retirement.

"While the economy is going badly right now, there is still a big baby boom retirement coming up, and those that haven't planned are facing up to 50 per cent of their staff retiring over the next five years," she says.

"Hiring someone who is ambitious and new is a great way to bring in someone inexpensive to fill in those gaps quickly."

For Friese, arts students are particularly suited to fit that mould.

"Arts students are often better, because they're cheaper and more adaptable... They're often better at learning, because that's what they're taught at school," she says.

For more information about TalentEgg, visit talentegg.ca.

CHECK OUT OUR BLOG @ HEEBONICS.CA

Tall Tutsis marked for death, Rwanda survivor says

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — In the Nazi worldview, it was a crime, punishable by death, to be Jewish. In the 1994 Rwandan genocide, being a Tutsi was a death sentence.

However, some Tutsis survived because of their short stature. The Hutu militia often determined if someone was a Tutsi, who tend to be tall, by his or her height.

"Twelve times, my mother was taken to the site of a mass grave to be murdered," said Eloge Christian Butera, a Tutsi who spoke to a full house at Winnipeg's Asper Jewish Community Campus on Jan. 8.

"Each time, she was spared because the murderers thought that she was too short to be a Tutsi."

Butera is one of the lucky ones. Not only did he survive the Rwandan genocide in 1994, which claimed close to one million, mainly Tutsi victims, but most of his immediate family, with the exception of his father, also survived.

The McGill University second-year law student was the keynote speaker at "Voices of Victims, Generations of Genocide," a program presented by the Jewish Students' Association/Hillel and National Jewish Campus Life, as well as several other university student associations and anti-genocide groups.

The evening began with the performance of a song written by Winnipeg composer Zane Zalis for his new Holocaust oratorio, which the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra is set to première in March. The song was sung by students from Miles Macdonell Collegiate.

The audience watched a moving interview with Gen. Roméo Dallaire, the Canadian commander of the UN Mission in Rwanda during the 100-day mass slaughter of Tutsi and moderate Hutu citizens. Dallaire, who is now a senator, said his small force received little support from the United Nations, adding that every United Nations member country approached for help would not do so.

Butera said that it was good to be in Winnipeg, where he first lived and attended university after coming to Canada in 2002.

"My purpose in sharing my personal, painful experiences is to try to strengthen your resolve to speak out against genocide and human rights abuses wherever they occur and not let them go unnoticed," he told his audience of largely university students.

Butera, originally from a small town in northeastern Rwanda, said his father was a doctor and his mother was a public servant.

"Because we were Tutsi, my father was not allowed to have tenure in the hospitals where he worked," he recalled. "You had to be of the right ethnic background. Therefore, we had to move every couple of years."

As a child, unaware of the situation, Butera thought that moving frequently was fun. The discrimination against Tutsis hit home for him in Grade 2, when a teacher demanded that he and four other Tutsis in his class stand up and then proceeded to berate them for all the ills in Rwanda. This became a regular occurrence throughout his school years.

April 7, 1994, is a day that Butera will always remember. He and his family were woken by their servant, who told them that family members had been murdered nearby and the killers were coming for them. They had 15 minutes to flee into the bush.

"The killers couldn't find us, so they killed our dog," Butera recalled.

The Butera family joined hundreds of other Tutsis fleeing south. The mass of refugees was stopped at a roadblock. His father was murdered. Most of the rest of the Tutsis fled into a school, but only 12 survived the subsequent attack on the school. Butera and his younger brother froze when they saw their father being killed and didn't go into the school. Instead, they ended up finding shelter in the home of a Hutu family, who had been friends of his parents.

Then Butera's mother decided to take her chances and go home. She left her young daughter with a friendly neighbour. Butera's mother managed to survive in hiding until the orgy of killing was brought to an end by an invading Tutsi army.

"Genocide doesn't end when the killing stops," Butera said. "For the survivors, there is trauma, painful memories and disease. And thousands of Tutsi women were raped."

He said that after the killings, his mother established a charity in Rwanda dedicated to helping other female survivors of the genocide who lost family and/or were raped.

"My mother is an inspiration to me," he said.

Half the money raised during the evening was donated to the charity.

"When children are being murdered on the other side of the world, what is our responsibility?" he asked. "It is hard to believe that men can commit genocide. Often, we have tried to fool ourselves into believing that it can't be happening."

He called on the members of his audience to "name and shame" the killers in the Congo (where, he reported, 600 people have been murdered since Christmas), the enablers of Darfur, the occupiers of Tibet and murderous tyrants everywhere.

Despite his experiences and what he sees going on around the world, Butera said that he remains hopeful – and especially hopeful that Barack Obama's election as president of the United States heralds a positive new beginning for the world.

Clarification

In the story "Montreal rally stresses morality of Israel's cause" (CJN, Jan. 15), Federation CJA president Marc Gold says he should have been quoted as saying, in reference to New Democratic Party members who are supportive of Israel: "They are as sick at heart as we are with the 'positions' of the leadership of that party."

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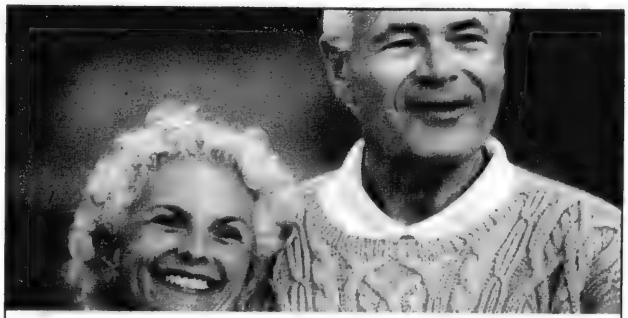

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Montreal leaders dive for cover during Israel visit

Red alert goes off during trek from Sderot

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Leaders of Federation CJA visiting areas of southern Israel within range of Hamas rockets got a taste of what life is like for people living there.

Last Friday, while driving from Sderot, a town near the Gaza border, to Be'er Sheva in the Negev, a Red Dawn alert went off.

Federation president Marc Gold wrote on his blog that the van they were travelling in quickly pulled onto the shoulder of the highway.

"We rushed out and lay down in a ditch by the side of the road. It is hard to describe the feelings that run through you as you wait for the sound of the missile to explode, a mixture of faith, resignation and helplessness," he wrote.

"This time the rocket must have fallen far from us because we didn't hear any boom."

Gold, along with this year's Combined Jewish Appeal general chair Ian Karper, Sephardi campaign chair Moise Amselem, and David Cape, chair of the federation's Israel and Overseas Department, arrived in Israel last Thursday for a three-day visit. The purpose was to show solidarity with Israel during the current conflict.

Just after landing, they heard that two Hamas missiles had fallen on Be'er Sheva, injuring eight people.

"We got on our phones and BlackBerries to make sure our friends were safe, and were relieved to hear that they were," Gold wrote.

"But it serves as a sad and sobering reminder of what life is like for those living under the constant threat of rocket fire."

Marc Gold

The Montreal Jewish community has been twinned with Be'er Sheva under a United Israel Appeal program for many years, and CJA funds a number of facilities and services there aimed at improving the quality of life.

Earlier on Friday, the Montrealers visited a playground in Sderot, where bomb shelters are as common a sight as swings and slides.

It dawned on Gold that, with Sderot enduring shelling from Gaza for eight years, young children have never known any other reality than running for cover every time an alert is sounded.

They also witnessed children in a school attending a session with a trauma therapist, which has become a regular part of the curriculum to help the kids deal with stress.

Then Gold and the others met with Israeli soldiers in the Shaare Negev region near Gaza. They gave them gifts of socks and letters of support written by grade 5 and 6 students at Akiva School.

"The soldiers were really moved by their letters, as indeed we all were as well."

The federation has established a relief fund for southern Israel, and hopes to raise $1 million for such projects as day trips out of harm's way for 4,000 children and setting up a trauma centre at a teachers' college in Be'er Sheva in order to free up beds at Sroka Hospital for those wounded in the fighting.

Meanwhile, the United Community of Russian-Speaking Jews of Quebec issued its own statement in support of Israel's armed offensive against Hamas, which the group blames for the conflict.

"Each and every innocent death is a real tragedy. We are sorry when any child cries, no matter Jewish or Arabic. We deeply sympathize with the Palestinian mothers who lose their children, but the cup of grief and suffering of the Israeli mothers is already over-filled," it reads.

The group's president Mark Groysberg said there are 20,000 Russian-speaking Jews in the province, according to information he obtained from Statistics Canada.

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Feature

Jews must continue to work to ensure 'Never Again'

By JOSH SCHEINERT

The history of genocide is a Jewish one in every sense of the word. The Holocaust was a seminal event in modern history that made the world confront its horror.

Less known, however, is the story of Raphael Lemkin, the Polish-Jewish lawyer and anti-genocide crusader. The term genocide never existed until it was coined by Lemkin, who managed to escape the Holocaust to America. He created the word by combining geno, the Greek word for race, and cide, the Latin word for killing. His efforts led to the 1948 Genocide Convention, making the act of genocide illegal, everywhere.

Lemkin's crusade was an effort to make sure that the Holocaust was the last genocide. To use Elie Weisel's phrase, it was, "So that my past does not have to be someone's future."

Oh, how we have failed them.

Genocide is the world's problem. No nation or people can turn away from it. But more so than for anyone else, genocide is a problem for Jews.

We bear the unfortunate burden of being the reason for the vow "Never again." With that burden comes a responsibility that we will never, like it or not, be able to shake. If there is genocide in the world, Jewish communities everywhere must be up in arms, working tirelessly to do what very few were willing to do for us.

Our track record so far is less than laudable. We failed in Cambodia, and two million people died. In Srebenica, we failed as 8,000 Bosnian Muslim boys and men were murdered in a United Nations safe zone. The death of 800,000 Rwandan Tutsis was another mark of shame upon our vow.

What would Lemkin say? What would our relatives, looking down on us, say?

Yes, you can say that Jews aren't the only ones who failed, and that would be true. But politics cannot factor into our excuses and cloud our morality. We've been cast in our role more firmly than others – not only is it moral, it's personal.

Jan. 27 is International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Jews and non-Jews around the world are supposed to gather and remember. We will recall how the world stood idly by as our parents and grandparents were gassed. In the end, we will have a moment of silence and vow the hypocritical vow, "Never again."

Just a few days later, in February, the world will mark the start of the sixth year of genocide in Sudan's Darfur region, making it, in length, a longer genocide than the Holocaust. And "Never again" will cement its transition to "Ever again."

How much longer does Darfur have to suffer before we get the electric shock needed to jolt us into action? I wrote a piece in this paper three years ago on this very subject. In an attempt to highlight the need for Jewish leadership on Darfur, I recalled the verse in Isaiah that says Jews must be a light unto the nations.

Lemkin helped brighten that light. We have played a role in extinguishing it.

Darfur's genocide has been happening for longer than the Holocaust – let me say it again: longer than the Holocaust – and it's been going on right before our eyes. The region is filled with harrowing tales of mass murder, rape and destruction that have targeted three ethnic groups – the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa. The number of victims is still growing.

Where are our rabbis crying out from our bimot? Why are our community federations, schools and agencies not sounding the alarm bells, organizing and rallying? Until our reaction stops being one of business as usual, with an occasional mention in a sermon or at a fundraising table, we will continue to fail as a community.

I don't want to be completely negative. I know we care and that there have been a few initiatives for Darfur that originated in our community.

Yet, until it can be asserted that efforts from Canada's Jews have translated into measurable improvement in the lives of Darfuris and helped accelerate and boost the inadequate efforts by our government to end the genocide, we have not done enough. Taking minimal action to placate our collective guilt as a community of genocide survivors is of no comfort to those in Darfur who are praying that they, too, will be a genocide survivor instead of a statistic.

There is a lot we can do, and I could list those things here. But first, before we even get to that stage, we have to want to do something. In six years of Darfur's genocide, we have not shown that we do.

In the Majdanek concentration camp there is a giant dome. Underneath it, in plain sight, are the ashes of tens of thousands of Jews. On top of the dome, there is an inscription that reads: "Let our fate be a warning to you."

For the past six years, we have squandered their warning. Oh, how we have failed them.

Josh Scheinert is a student at Osgoode Hall Law School and a past advocacy director of STAND Canada (Students Taking Action Now Darfur). To learn how you can help Darfur, visit www.standcanada.org, www.sdcanada.org and www.savedarfur.org.

At a Toronto rally in 2006 the public spoke up against genocide in Darfur.

In cjnews.com this week

When Zac Kaye, Hillel of Greater Toronto's executive director, accepted a job as a Hillel professional at the University of New South Wales in Australia, he never imagined that 25 years later, he would receive a lifetime achievement award for a quarter century of service to the Jewish student community.

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Food trends to watch out for in 2009

Lisa Weinberg

Q. With the new year underway, I am wondering what new food trends you see emerging.

A. I do see some new trends unique to 2009, as well as a continuation of some of last year's trends.

The biggest, newest trend I see is a result of a growing interest in watching our spending. With the recession upon us, many people are looking at their food bill and making cuts. Some of these changes are positive as far as nutrition is concerned, since one of the biggest trends I am seeing is people cooking and eating at home more often and eating out less. Often the meals we prepare at home are healthier, smaller and contain less fat, calories and salt than those prepared in restaurants.

We are purchasing fewer prepared foods and treats, focusing on staples instead. In addition, when we do eat out, we are eating smaller portions, as people are sharing more often, ordering one course rather than two. More of us are bringing lunch to work rather than eating restaurant food, which means we are cutting back on calories, fat, salt, sugar and portion size.

Another trend that is a continuation from last year but expanding in 2009 is the push toward buying local foods. Grocery stores are advertising meats, produce, dairy and baked goods that are locally grown and produced. This is in an effort to protect the environment by making our carbon footprint smaller as well as supporting our local economy. In many cases, when we purchase local foods, we are buying in season and getting fresher and healthier food.

The interest in organics is still expanding, and at a great rate, as organics are becoming increasingly affordable and appear in most grocery stores.

The trend to list and/or remove trans fat continues. Don't be fooled by claims on the front of the box that say foods have no trans fat – read the ingredients.

Tea is a hot trend, with more varieties available, and foods with added nutrients such as calcium and omega 3 continue to be available, as does a push for more "natural" foods with fewer preservatives. More products that are lower in sodium and sugar are being introduced.

All in all, I think we'll see some healthy trends in 2009 and we'll find new products that may be a welcome addition to our diets.

Lisa Weinberg is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in Toronto, in private practice and at the Genesis Professional Group. If you have any nutrition questions, please send them to The CJN.

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FOR THE CHILDREN: The Canadian Friends of the Shabtai Levi Home recently hosted Music from the Past for the Future of the Children, which raised more than $700,000 for abused children and mothers at the Shabtai Levi Home in Haifa, Israel. The money raised will assist the Mother/Child Unit, the first of its kind in Israel where both the mothers and children are rehabilitated. It was created in 2002 with funds raised by Canadian Friends of the Shabtai Levi Home. Pictured, from left, are 2008 Shabtai Levi event co-chairs Cynthia Small, Esther Michaels, Marya Grad and Ellen Goldstein.

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Honouring Holtzberg

Chabad Lubavitch of Markham will host an event for women that examines the convergence of inner and outer beauty.

Proceeds of the Feb. 1 event are being donated to the Moshe Holtzberg Fund. Moshe is the son of Rabbi Gavriel and Rivkah Holtzberg of Chabad Lubavitch of Mumbai, who lost their lives in the recent terrorist attack there.

The event is being sponsored by Ferro Hair Art & Spa, and participants will be treated to a morning of pampering, spirited discussion, free gifts, door prizes, and lots of tips from experts on how to look your best at every age.

Guest speaker Goldie Plotkin will be talking about Rebbetzin Holtzberg and the many profound ways in which she exemplified inner beauty.

"This event is a cross between the television shows What Not to Wear and Extreme Makeover," said Allison Solomon, program chair. "We have experts presenting who will talk about fashions and makeup tips at all ages, all body types, and all styles.

"But we also want to be able to pay tribute to the legacy of the Holtzbergs, and to talk about the true meaning of beauty. One's capacity to give back speaks to that virtue."

The event takes place from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 83 Green Lane and will include brunch. Tickets are $30, and fund raised will be delivered directly to the Holtzberg grandparents in Israel.

For more information, please contact Plotkin at 905-886-0420 or rebbetzin@chabadmarkham.org.

On Campus

Hamas using women, kids as human shields: expert

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

More than 70 students and young professionals squeezed into The House last week to learn how Israel found itself in a second war since 2006.

Ari Applbaum, an educator with The David Project, a non-profit educational organization that "promotes a fact-based understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict," was in Toronto last week to present a lecture titled "What Is the Deal with Hamas?" sponsored by the Birthright Alumni Community, The House and the Canadian Centre for Israel Activism.

"We cannot understand the situation in Gaza without talking about the role of Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran," said Applbaum, who lives in Jerusalem and served in the Israel Defence Forces from 1998 to 2001 and went on to obtain a master's degree in security studies at Tel Aviv University.

"The IDF believes that parts of the rockets are created in Iran. The funding for a lot of Hamas' operations are coming from Iran. Iran in a sense, as part of a greater strategy, is using the two-pronged proxies of Hezbollah and Hamas to really make Israel's life difficult."

He said Syria is also a big funder of Hamas, whose headquarters is in Damascus.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia is competing with Egypt to fulfil the role as the leader in the Arab world.

Despite having signed a peace agreement with Israel in 1979, Egypt has been a major factor in the conflict since the 1967 war.

Through Egypt, there has been an enormous amount of smuggling weapons through tunnels into Gaza, Applbaum said.

"Egypt has not been an active party in facilitating this," Applbaum said, "but it certainly has not done everything in its power to stop the smuggling."

He said that after the Six Day War, when Israel offered to return the conquered Gaza Strip to Egypt in exchange for peace, Egypt declined the offer, because it didn't want to be responsible for the population there.

After 20 years of Israeli rule, in 1987, the first intifadah began and Hamas was founded.

Ironically, Israel encouraged the formation of Hamas, he said.

"Hamas was started as a grassroots organization formed from different charities. Israel did encourage those charities to help them build schools and hospitals. The idea was if we help them help each other, they will calm things down and we won't experience much more of this intifadah."

However, unlike Fatah, which takes a more national approach to the conflict, Hamas operates on the principle of religious fundamentalism and is violently opposed to the concept of a Jewish state in Israel.

He said that over the past few years, Israel was learning to better prevent suicide bombings, but at the turn of the century, terrorists graduated to producing and launching primitive rockets called Qassams.

"There were very few in 2001, but it has increased every single year since... Every year the... range grows and every year the accuracy gets better, and Israel doesn't know how to deal with this threat."

When Hamas won the Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006, Applbaum said that Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization weren't sure how to handle having Hamas in a position of power.

Rejecting a unity government with Fatah, Hamas violently overthrew the government in Gaza.

Israel decided not to recognize Hamas as a legitimate political group, closed the border, cut all ties with Gaza and did everything it could to strengthen Fatah, in hopes that the Palestinians would turn on Hamas. But, he said, it only increased resentment and hostilities against Israel.

Because of the increasing number of rockets threatening Israeli communities, Israel agreed to a ceasefire with Hamas in 2008. But throughout the ceasefire, Qassams continued to fall and Hamas continued to smuggle weapons and build more tunnels, he said.

"Three weeks ago, they started a barrage of dozens and dozens of Qassams and Grad missiles that have a longer range," Applbaum said. Israel then started Operation Cast Lead, its Gaza offensive.

He said Israel's main goals are to end rocket fire and terror attacks from the Gaza Strip and to weaken Hamas' structure.

He added that after three weeks of fighting, the Qassam rate has been reduced, many Hamas operatives have been killed, hundreds have been captured, and according to a report, 70 per cent of the tunnels have been destroyed.

Despite international pressure for a ceasefire, Applbaum said that Israel can't agree to a ceasefire if Hamas continues to smuggle weapons and build its arsenal.

In response to the allegation that Israel is using disproportionate force in Gaza, Applbaum said, "Every state has the right to self-defence, and no state needs to adjust its capabilities to the capabilities of the group or country that is threatening it."

He acknowledged that many civilians have been caught in the crossfire, but said that Israel does everything it can to avoid civilian casualties.

"Hamas has been deploying a method of human shields, using children, women to protect them," he said, showing images of rockets being fired from backyards, school playgrounds, cemeteries and mosques.

He said that when it comes to delivering a message to the media, he is impressed with Israel's insistence that "no other country would allow even one rocket to be launched at a city," and that "is one argument that in any interview has not been combated."

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An amazing and colourful culinary journey

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

Janna Gur's stunning new cookbook, The Book of New Israeli Food (Schocken, 2008), is a magnificent coffee-table book as well as a complete cookbook. She brings us the sumptuous colour, culinary diversity and history of today's Israeli cuisine, beautifully illustrated by Eilon Paz, a photographer who is intimate with the local Israeli scene.

Gur was born and raised in the former Soviet Union and immigrated to Israel in 1974. She lives in Tel Aviv and is the founder and chief editor of Al Hashulchan Gastronomic Monthly (On the Table), the leading Israeli food and wine magazine.

She recently taught a class about the new Israeli cuisine at Bonnie Stern's cooking school in Toronto. When I interviewed Gur by telephone, she shared with me her passion for the new Israeli food and the integrity of using pure Israeli ingredients.

In her intriguing introduction to The Book of New Israeli Food, she describes Israeli food as a product of diverse cultures. The Jews of the Diaspora, settling in a homeland that was new to them, brought their varied cuisines to the table and integrated additional ingredients and ideas from their Arab neighbours.

Her delicious, easy-to-follow recipes represent these influences and include some creative interpretations of classics by celebrated Israeli chefs, including Beetroot and Pomegranate Salad, Fish Falafel in Spicy Harissa Mayonnaise and Homemade Shawarma. You'll also find interesting recipes for Jerusalem Mixed Grill, Traditional Chopped Liver as well as Chocolate and Halva Coffeecake.

The Book of New Israeli Food offers a culinary experience for every occasion, richly spiced and imbued with cross-cultural flavours. All of this is enriched by Paz's vibrantly coloured photographs along with short narratives about significant aspects of Israel's diverse cuisine, such as the generous and unique Israeli breakfast (which grew out of the needs of kibbutz life), locally produced cheeses that rival those of Europe and a dramatic renaissance of wine culture in this ancient land.

Here is an excerpt from Gur's The Book of New Israeli Food about the upcoming holiday of Tu b'Shvat, which falls on Feb. 9 this year:

"Originally not a festival at all, Tu b'Shvat was merely a date on the Jewish calendar, literally 'the 15th day of Shvat.' This was the date on which the age of trees was calculated for the purposes of tithing and taxing. Thus, in Judaica sources, it came to be known as the New Year for the Trees. In biblical times, Tu b'Shvat was the day farmers brought the first fruits of their trees to the Temple in Jerusalem. When the Temple was destroyed and the Jewish People were exiled from the Land of Israel, Tu b'Shvat lost much of its original significance, only to be rediscovered in the Middle Ages by Jewish mystics who imbued it with deeper symbolic meaning.

"The Tu b'Shvat seder meal was established by the Kabbalists of Safed, modelled after the Passover seder and featuring the seven species of the Land of Israel: wheat, barley, vines, figs, pomegranates, olive oil and dates, the staples of the biblical period… Jews all over the world marked the day by eating fruits of the Land of Israel, mainly dried ones like figs and dates, raisins and almonds… As far as food is concerned – every Jewish holiday must have some culinary aspect – Israelis still feast on dried fruit, even though fresh fruits abound even at the height of winter."

FIGS STUFFED WITH BULGUR AND CRANBERRY SALAD

Figs, fresh or dried, with their sweet luscious flesh and firm skin, are perfect for stuffing. Here is a light, healthy dish to enjoy.

10 fresh figs
pomegranate concentrate, for serving

Salad
3 1/2 oz. (100 g) bulgur wheat
1/2 cup dried cranberries, chopped coarsely
1 cup carrots, grated coarsely
2-3 tbsp. fresh coriander, chopped
1 tbsp. sesame seeds, roasted
3 tbsp. pecans, chopped
2 tbsp. pomegranate concentrate

Soak the bulgur wheat in water for 4-5 hours, until it swells up and softens. Or add half a cup of water to the wheat and cook in a microwave oven for 3-4 minutes until the bulgur softens and absorbs the water. Allow to cool.

Mix the bulgur with the other salad ingredients. The preparation up to this point may be done in advance and the salad kept in the refrigerator.

Halve the figs and scoop out some of the flesh, which you can add to the salad. Place 2 fig halves on each plate, heap on the salad, sprinkle with pomegranate concentrate and serve. Serves 10.

Pomegranate concentrate (also known as pomegranate syrup) is available in Middle-Eastern stores. If you can't find it, boil pomegranate juice until it reduces to a syrupy consistency.

TU B'SHVAT CAKE

Lots and lots of dried fruits and nuts and just a little bit of dough to hold them all together. The choice of fruit is all yours, the more the merrier. Just remember to combine different colours to make the cake more attractive. This dense, juicy, not overly sweet cake will keep for a long time.

7 tbsp. flour
7 tbsp. sugar
3 eggs
7 oz. (200 g) assorted dried fruits (prunes, apricots, raisins, figs, papaya, cranberries)
7 oz. (200 g) assorted nuts (walnuts, pecans, hazelnuts, almonds)
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
small pinch of ground cloves

Preheat oven to 300. Mix flour, sugar, eggs and spices.

Chop larger dried fruits (apricots, prunes, papaya) coarsely. Add them with the rest of the fruits and nuts to the dough and mix thoroughly. Transfer to a greased loaf pan and bake for 1-1/2 hours, until the cake is a deep golden-brown.

Cool completely and slice very thin with a bread knife, but only what you plan to serve. The unsliced cake keeps better. Makes 1 loaf pan.

Norene Gilletz is a cookbook author, cooking teacher and food consultant. For information, call 416-226-2466 or visit her website at http://www.gourmania.com.

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Judit & Miklos Simai - your dedication to each other since more than 15 leap years ago is greatly inspiring. Love from your family.

Happy 95th birthday to David Wise. With love and best wishes from all the kids, grandkids, and "GG" kids!

Mazel tov to Camelia Israel, from Chile, on her 100th birthday! With love, Julie, Alex and Aimee Israel and all the grandchildren.

Teresa Berger & Mark Burton celebrated their wedding on Nov. 30.

Mazel tov to Sam Milner on his recent bar mitzvah. Love, Mom, Dad and Amanda.

Mazel tov Kalanit Borer. It's your first birthday! Love, parents Sara & Terry, grandparents Linda & Leonard Borer, Rachel & Simon Weisman. Great-grandmother Ester Weisman.

Mazel tov to Joshua Bendelac on his seventh birthday! Love always Mommy, Daddy, Ashley, Alyssa and Adina.

Jenny & Ilan announce the birth of their son Seth on Oct. 21! Proud grandparents Ruth & Simon Sabbah and Emmy & David Gershon.

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What's New deadlines: Monday, Jan. 26, is the deadline for the Feb. 5 issue and Monday, Feb. 2, is the deadline for the Feb. 12 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Thursday, Jan. 22

CHASSIDIC MUSIC

Cantor Marshall Loomer presents "The History of Chassidic Music Through Song," providing insight and demonstrating niggunim of chassidic rabbis. 7:30 p.m. at Beth David Synagogue. Free. 416-633-5500

Saturday, Jan. 24

KOL AMI TRIVIA NIGHT

Temple Kol Ami is holding a trivia night event, 7:30 p.m. at the Leo Baeck Day School. $10. RSVP, 905-482-0445 or rlevenstein@rogers.com.

BENEFIT CONCERT

Soprano **Miriam Eskin** and pianist-arranger **Nina Shapilsky** perform a Yiddish and Broadway Cabaret Night to benefit the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir. 8 p.m. at the Winchevsky Centre. $25. 416-789-5502

Sunday, Jan. 25

UNDERSTANDING TALMUD

Torah in Motion hosts a Sunday morning beit midrash program with **Rabbi David Bigman**, rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Ma'ale Gilboa, on "Structure as a Tool for Understanding Talmud." 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Yeshivat Or Chaim. www.torahinmotion.org or 416-633-5770

OPERATIC CONCERT

The Reuben Cipin Health Living Centre's Coro Giuseppe Verdi choir performs a winter operatic concert with **Giuseppe Macina** conducting and **Henry Renglich** on piano. 2:30 p.m. at the Baycrest Terrace. $2. All welcome.

JEWISH HISTORY FILM

Kehillat Shaarei Torah continues a modern Jewish history film series, tonight and Feb. 1, screening Faith and Fate, a series exploring how events in history affected Jews and how Jews affected world history, with **Rabbi David Aronson**. Tonight, Implosion of the Old Order, 7:30 p.m. $10/evening, $25/series. 416-229-2600, ext. 3

Monday, Jan. 26

DAVENING SKILLS

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation skills series continues with **Cantor Avraham Sultan** on "Voice and Torah and Haftorah." 7 p.m. 416-789-3213, ext. 202

RELIGION 101

Beth Emeth and Beth Tikvah synagogues series on different religions with **Rabbi Wayne Allen**. Tonight, "The United Church of Canada," at Beth Emeth. 8 p.m. Non-members $5. 416-221-3433

2 B MARRIED

The Jewish Family Institute hosts a five-week seminar for engaged couples beginning. 8 p.m. at the Village Shul. $250/couple. 416-785-1107

Tuesday, Jan. 27

BENEFIT FOR TARYAN

Seva plays the fourth annual benefit for **Bennie Taryan**, an evening of rock 'n' roll in support of Bennie and his mom, Monica. Bennie has familial dysautonomia and requires extensive medical care. 8 p.m. at the Silver Dollar, downtown Toronto. $20. lebahouse@gmail.com or 416-221-4884.

WHO IS THE MESSIAH?

Temple Har Zion presents **Rabbi Michael Skobac** of Jews for Judaism on "How to Recognize the Messiah, Who Is the Messiah and What Is the Messiah Supposed to Do." Interfaith couples welcome. 7:30 p.m. Non-members $5.

A PIGEON AND A BOY

National Council of Jewish Woman of Canada presents a book review of A Pigeon and a Boy by **Meir Shalev** with **Harriet Morris**. 7:30 p.m. at 4700 Bathurst St. RSVP

Continued on page 27

JNF

JEWISH NATIONAL FUND OF TORONTO
announces

WINNERS
OF THE RENEE AND IRWIN NADAL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

MIA KIBEL

STEPHANIE FRIEDMAN

JACQUIE MINCER

A new tradition has been established in conjunction with JNF Toronto's Annual Negev Dinner. Initiated by Honouree Miles Nadal in 2007, ***The Renee and Irwin Nadal Memorial Scholarship Award*** is a unique venture in assisting a Toronto youngster to visit Israel. Miles Nadal sponsors the undertaking which involves students across Metro Toronto in our Jewish Day School system participating in an essay-writing contest. The winner receives two complimentary airline tickets to Israel courtesy of Miles Nadal.

The winner of the 2008 Essay Contest was ***Mia Kibel***, a Grade 8 student at Bialik Hebrew Day School. The second place runner up was ***Stephanie Friedman***, a Grade 7 student at United Synagogue Day School (Bayview Campus) while third place was awarded to ***Jacquie Mincer***, a Grade 8 student at Bialik Hebrew Day School.

BENEFIT CONCERT

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For ticket information or place an ad in the Programme Booklet:
call 416-636-5425 or 416-633-5500

What's New

Continued from page 26

416-633-510 or reception@ncjwc-ts.org. Non-members $5.

A WOMAN OF VALOUR

Beth Tikvah Sisterhood continues "A Study of *Eshet Chayil*: A Woman of Valour" with **Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein**. 8 p.m. Non-members $5. 416-221-3433

PROSTATE CANCER

Man to Man and Side to Side, prostate cancer support groups, host **Dr. Keith Jarvi** on "Prostate Health," followed by a question period. 7:30 p.m. at the Toronto Botanical Gardens. 416-932-8820

WRESTLING WITH GOD

Join Mekorot for "Wrestling With God: The Challenge of the Holocaust" with **James Diamond**. Wednesdays, 8-9:30 p.m. Tonight-Feb. 25 at Or Chaim Yeshiva. Register, 416-8772050 or www.mekorot.ca

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Jewish Genealogical Society and the Canadiana Department, North York Central Library present **Prof. Paul Magocsi**, chair of Ukrainian studies at the University of Toronto, on "The History of Ukraine 1740-1940: The Changing Borders and the Jewish Communities of Ukraine." 8 p.m. North York Central Library. www.jgstoronto.ca

Other News

MARKETING FOR SUCCESS

United Jewish Appeal, Israeli Division Business Cabinet, hosts "Strategies for Challenging Times: Understanding the Canadian Mosaic" with **Howard Lichtman** with a dessert reception. Thursday, Jan. 29, 7 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building. $10 in advance, $20 at the door. RSVP, ggomperts@ujafed.org, www.ujaevents.com/registration/success or 416-631-5707.

SAVE DARFUR

B'nai Brith Youth Organization Teen's 12-hour Genocide Aware-a-thon takes place Jan. 31, 8 p.m. to Feb. 1, 8 a.m. An all-night initiative of awareness, education and advocacy. RSVP, kgoodman@bbyo.org or 416-398-2004.

INNER/OUTER BEAUTY

Join Chabad Markham Sisterhood for "WOW" and discover your inner and outer beauty. With a tribute to **Rebbetzin Rivka Holtzberg**. "What Not to Wear" includes a fashion stylist, makeup demo and gourmet brunch. Sunday, Feb. 1. Brunch 10:30 a.m. Program 11 a.m. $30. Tickets, **Lindsay Danzinger**, 905-886-0420, ext. 227, or **Jo-Anne Herr**, 905-597-4108.

COLD NIGHTS, HOT FILMS

Kolel presents My Father, My Lord, on Sunday, Feb. 1, 7 p.m. A discussion will follow this provocative film about Jewish fundamentalists. 1028 Queen St. W. $10 at the door. No pre-registration.

ISRAELI CINEMA SERIES

Hebrew University, the Canadian Centre for Israel Activism, the Speakers Action group and Hillel of Greater Toronto present two Israeli films: Feb 3, Sweet Mud, and March 3, Nina's Tragedies. 7:30 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre. Tickets, 416-485-8000.

TU B'SHVAT SEDER

Emunah Women of Toronto hold a Tu b'Shvat seder on Monday, Feb. 9, 12:30 p.m. at 4300 Bathurst St., in the party room, with a program by **Rebbetzin Shulamis Witty** and **Leona Lakser**. A light lunch will be served. $10, non-members $15. 416-636-0036

INFORMATION SESSION

Participate in a session on mindfulness with Baycrest research fellow, **Dr. Michael Marxen**. Research is finding many benefits to using this strategy in the treatment of mood disorders or for stress reduction and relaxation. Monday, Feb. 9, 1:30-3 p.m. Register, 416-785-2500, ext. 3374, or lkamenitz@baycrest.org.

RACHAEL'S CENTRE

Rachael Turkienicz teaches a variety of day courses on the Bible, Jewish law, Jewish ethics and *mussar* at Rachael's Centre. For info or to register, visit www.rachaelscentre.org or call 416-630-6488.

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child, 4600 Bathurst St. Information/registration 416-638-7800 or www.jfandcs.com. Call **Shawna**, ext. 215, for info and registration.

Marriage Preparation: Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A six-session group for engaged couples marrying in the next year. Begins Monday, Jan. 26, at First Narayever Synagogue, 7:30-9 p.m.

Dating In Mid-life: A workshop for men and women 40+ on how to nurture a lasting relationship. Tuesday, Jan. 27, 7-9:30 p.m. at Lipa Green Building.

When You're About to Separate – What to Tell The Kids: A workshop for parents about to separate or in the early stages of separation on how to best meet your child's needs. Tuesday, Jan. 27, 6:30-9 p.m. at the Promenade Mall, #313.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 24

FOR SENIORS

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC hosts Thursday, Jan. 29, 1:30 p.m., The Economic Crisis: Financial Management in Retirement, with **Ellen Roseman**, Toronto Star financial columnist. Info: **Phyllis**, 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or phyllisf@mnjcc.org.

Chai Shalom Society Beth Sholom Synagogue holds a Tu b'Shvat seder led by **Karen Goodis**, principal of Beth Sholom Hebrew School, Wednesday, Feb. 4, noon. $8. RSVP, **Rivy** at 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

Earl Bales Seniors Club In The Park. Sunday dance, Jan. 25; Casino Rama, Wednesday, Feb. 11. Call Tuesday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Toronto Seniors Council presents "Did You Know?" a lecture about what services are available. Wednesday, Jan. 28, 1-2:30 p.m. Free.

Wellness Lecture, "Natural Pain Management" with homeopath **Nisha Thadani**, Thursday, Jan. 29, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Free.

Betel kosher cafeteria open Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Also available for home catering. Contact, ext. 123.

WAGMAN CENTRE

55 Ameer Ave. 416-785-2500.

The Columbus Centre Choir performs in the assembly room on Sunday, Jan. 25, 2 p.m. $2.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca

My Hebrew Picnic: Share Hebrew with your child through music and games. Newborn-2. For beginners and native Hebrew speakers. Mondays, 10-10:45 a.m. Ext. 390.

Youths ages 13-16 interested in the Maccabi Games contact **Grant**, gsmith@bjcc.ca or ext. 257.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www.mnjcc.org

Israeli folk dancing with **Karin Charash**. Sunday, Jan. 25, and Sunday, Feb. 1, 7-9 pm. Adults $10, students/seniors $8. Ages 18+. Info, ext. 154, or jewishlife@mnjcc.org.

Habonim-Dror Club Gesher Kesher meets Sunday, Feb. 1, 4-6 p.m. Info, **Eitan Grinspun**, 416-633-2511.

Sundays on Bloor, **Diana Mingail** on "Jewish Pirates: Payback for the Spanish Inquisition and Expulsion of the Jews in 1492," Sunday, Jan. 25, 11 a.m. $9, includes a light breakfast. Ext. 0.

Toronto Jewish Film Society presents The Black Book, Sunday, Jan. 25, 4 and 7:30 p.m. at Al Green Theatre. Ext. 606.

Deb Filler performs in Well, I'll Tell Ya...! Jan. 29 and Jan. 31, 8 p.m., and Feb. 1, 3 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre. $25. Tickets, ext. 0, or www.mnjcc.org.

Volunteers Needed

BAYCREST VISITS

Baycrest Centre needs volunteers to visit seniors, assist with programs, help in offices and support our Baycrest community. Bring quality of life to our aging population. Hours can be flexible. Call 416-785-200, ext. 2572.

SCHOOL COUNSELLOR HONOURED: The Jewish School Counselors' Association recently honoured Marv Sniderman, standing second from right, for his years of service as a guidance counsellor at Associated Hebrew Schools. Richard Stoll, standing middle, a counsellor at Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, was voted new chair of the association. Stoll replaces Gail Freeman, seated middle, vice-principal of the Kamin Education Centre, who has served as chair of the association since its inception in 2002.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Leslie Hochteil	Jan 5/09	7601 Bathurst Street
Elisabeth Greenwald	Jan 6/09	3560 Bathurst Street
Belle Bernstein	Jan 3/09	6 Grimthorpe Road
Bubby Meyers	Jan 5/09	377 Ridelle Avenue
David Kushnir	Jan 8/09	65 Spring Garden Avenue
Earl Mandell	Jan 7/09	357 Hillhurst Blvd.
Harry Kay	Jan 8/09	9 Artreeva Drive
Joy Weisfeld	Jan 8/09	23 Fairleigh Crescent
Eve Baxter	Jan 8/09	268 Ridley Blvd.
Esther Lieberman	Jan 11/09	24 Shortil Road
Markus Cohen	Jan 11/09	90 Bedford Road

HEBREW BASIC BURIAL

Celia Fisher	Jan 7/09	70 Baif Blvd.

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Shenfeld, Natalia	Dec. 25/08	Private
Stern, David	Dec. 30/08	77 Searle Ave.
Cooper, Rose Andrea	Dec/ 30/08	12 Blaydon Ave.
Bidner, Samuel	Dec. 30/08	
Solodovnik, Roza	Dec. 31/08	Private
Kornhauser, Emanuel	Dec. 31/08	110 Bidewell Ave.
Kofman, Alexander	Jan. 1/09	7 Townsgate
Cohen, Eileen	Jan. 2/08	3560 Bathurst St.
Blackman, Pearl	Jan. 2/09	3560 Bathurst St.
Sofrin, Samuel	Jan. 3/09	601 Clark Ave. W.
Laba, Freda	Jan. 3/09	4001 Bayview Ave.
Rubinshteyn, Iosif	Jan. 4/09	32 Clarissa Dr.
Lindenberg, Philip	Jan. 5/09	1801 Bayview Ave.
Clairmont, Esther	Jan. 5/09	55 Ameer Ave.
Liwerant, Benno Wolfgang	Jan. 6/09	4 Captain Rolph Blvd.

Dr. Martin Saul Rosen (1924-2009) ז"ל

Suddenly on January 1, 2009, Martin Rosen, beloved husband of Helen (Goldberg), loving father of Denise (Terry), Arthur (Irene), Charles (Susan), Michael (Eva), Mark (Joanne) and Paula. Devoted grandfather of Jason (Melisa), Jessica, Daniel, Noah, Samantha, Joel, Lianne and Nyomi. Brother to Arthur (deceased WW II), Sydney and Isabel. Martin served in the Royal Canadian Air Force in World War II and then graduated from the University of Toronto Medical School in 1950. Martin practiced medicine in Toronto for many years at Mount Sinai Hospital, Doctors Hospital, the Baycrest Centre, and Humber Memorial Hospital, where he served on the hospital board. He left Canada in 1980 and continued in family medicine for 10 years in Vernon, Texas, followed by 5 years on the psychiatric staff at the Vernon State Hospital. Martin then moved to Palm Desert, California where he enjoyed a busy and active retirement. Martin will be sadly missed by all of us, but the legacy he leaves behind is rich and bountiful. Private service. Memorial donations may be made to Canadian Magen David Adom for Israel, 4580 Dufferin Street, Suite 508, Toronto, Ontario M3H 5Y2 (416-780-0034).

It is with our deepest appreciation that we thank our family and friends for your generosity, friendship, comfort and understanding during our time of sorrow.
Your thoughtfulness will be remembered.

The family of the late

GAIL KOVEN ז"ל

Max and Alex, Susie & Jake Grossman, Barbara & Steven Yack

Pomerantz, Gordon. Peacefully at the St. Catharines General on Wednesday January 7, 2009 in his 86th year. Gordon Pomerantz, beloved husband of Freda Pomerantz (*nee Litvack*). Loving father of Dale (*and Mark Mayerson*), Jill Pomerantz and Miriam (*and Jeff Sharpe*). Adored grandfather of Katie, Keith, Shauna, Justin, Tyler and Ryan. Dear brother of Sylvia (*and the late Arnold Keshen*) and Aaron Pomerantz (*and Joan*). Dear brother-in-law of Sarah Pomerantz, Marvin (*and Shirley*) Litvack and Fanny Brass. Gordon will be remembered for his generosity, for his sense of humour and for his devotion to family, cousins, nieces, nephews and their families. Predeceased by two brothers Morris and Joe. Gordon owned and ran Pomerantz Clothing and Footwear in Thorold for many years and then opened Uniform Sportswear tailor shop in St. Catharines. Funeral service was held Friday January 9, 2009 at Patrick J. Darte Funeral Chapel, 39 Court Street, St. Catharines (905-685-6584) at 1pm in the funeral home chapel. Interment was held at B'nai Israel Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Congregation B'nai Israel (905-685-6767) or to the charity of your choice would be appreciated by the family.

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Zoe, we love and miss you more than words …

Mom, Dad, and Lindsay

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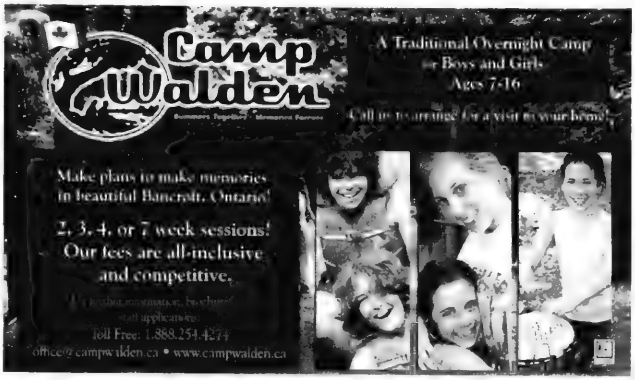
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Camp Director: Jonathan Pivnick
Tel: Ottawa, 613-244-9210;
Montreal, 514-396-7091;
Toronto, 416-607-6529
E-mail: info@cbbottawa.com
Website: www.cbbottawa.com
As Camp B'nai Brith of Ottawa begins its' 74th year, campers from Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa, as well as the United States and Israel will enjoy the programming and facilities that CBB has to offer. Whether water skiing, sailing, canoeing, swimming in the Olympic size pool, tripping and hiking, A&C, dance, drama, music, or the many other programs and special events, your children are sure to have a great summer. Our new "WEEKENDER" program or popular two-week starter camp is ideal for 1st time campers to experience camp, and many decide to extend their stay. Camp director Jonathan Pivnick has worked with children and adolescents his entire adult life, and has taught, mentored, and been an administrator in education, sports, and camping, and oversees a camp staff that are all first aid and CPR certified. CBB is peanut and nut sensitive operating a kosher kitchen under the Ottawa Vaad Hakashrut. Visit us at cbbottawa.com

CAMP EITAN
475 Patricia Ave.,
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Director: M. Levine
Tel: 416-225-1187 / 416-781-2333
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Director: Jeff Rose
Tel: 416-638-2635 Fax: 416-638-8803
Union for Reform Judaism's Camp George opened its doors in 1999 and has acquired a wonderful reputation after only 10 seasons. Located just 2 1/4 hrs. north of Toronto, the camp program is designed to enhance the physical, social, and personal skills of youngsters completing grades 2-10 in a warm and friendly Jewish environment. Camp George is OCA Accredited.

CAMP KADIMAH
5670 Spring Garden Rd., Suite 508,
Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 1H6
Administration Director: Joanna Wexler
Tel: 902-422-7491
Fax: 902-425-3722
Website: www.campkadimah.com
Camp Kadimah is located on the beautiful shores of Lake William, Nova Scotia. A CYJ camp, we offer activities for children ages 7-16 including arts and crafts, land sports, water-ski and wakeboarding, sailing, canoe, instructional swim, drama, Israeli song and dance, and scouting. Call 1-866-KADIMAH or visit www.campkadimah.com for more information.

CAMP KODIAK
4069 Pheasant Run,
Mississauga, Ont. L5L 2C2
Director: David Stoch
Tel: 905-569-7595
Fax: 905-569-6045
Toll Free: 1-877-569-7595
E-mail: info@campkodiak.com
Website: www.campkodiak.com
To most of our kids, Camp Kodiak is a very special "home away from home", a safe, nurturing, environment where magic happens. Kids who have no friends suddenly have lots. Kids who feel like failures quickly discover their many talents & abilities. Our campers return home much stronger, with greatly improved confidence and self-esteem.

CAMP MOSHAVA CANADA
296 Wilson Ave.,
Toronto, Ont. M3H 1S8
Director: Vicky Shizgal
Tel: 416-630-7578
Fax: 416-630-8301
E-mail: office@campmoshava.org
Website: www.campmoshava.org
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CAMP NORTHLAND-B'NAI BRITH
1118 Centre St., Suite 202,
Thornhill, Ont. L4J 7R9
Director: Nicole Markowitz
Tel: 905-881-0018
Fax: 905-881-9019
Website: www.campnbb.com
A co-ed residential camp ages 7-15 on 725 picturesque acres in the Haliburton Highlands. Our experienced staff help campers build life-long friendships and memories through programs designed to meet the needs of each age group. A variety of water and land activities are offered, including Judaic programs. Optional canoe trip program. Kosher Food. Doctor and nurses on site.

CAMP RAMAH IN CANADA
491 Lawrence Ave. W., Suite 400,
Toronto, Ont. M5M 1C7
Admin. Director: Netta Zweig
Tel: 416-789-2193 x29
Fax: 416-789-3970
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CAMP SHALOM
788 Marlee Avenue, Suite 207
Toronto, Ont. M6B 3K1
Director: Adam Shulman
Tel: 416-783-6744
Fax: 416-783-9363
Website: www.camp-shalom.com
Founded in 1948. 6, 3½, and 2½ week sessions. Children completing grades 2-7. Safe, nurturing environment. Strong informal Jewish & Zionist content. Nut-free. Strictly Kosher. Activities include; water-ski, sports, cooking, sail, shira, nkud, fitness, media, arts & crafts, nature, ropes, drama, gymnastics, photography, mini-golf, canoe, archery and instructional swim. Tons of ruach!

CAMP TAMAKWA
161 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 501,
Toronto, Ont. M4P 1J5
Camp Director: Craig Perlmutter
Tel: 416-924-7433
Fax: 416-924-5822
Rising out of the forest, Camp Tamakwa is a "children's village" - where campers live and play in a safe, creative, nurturing habitat - and where they are encouraged to do what they do best…be themselves. Tamakwa offers a multitude of watersports, land sports and creative arts activities, in addition to an extensive canoe tripping program.

CAMP WALDEN
Sol Birenbaum, B. Sc. Hon., B. Ed.
Co-Owner and Camp Director
sol@campwalden.ca
Website: www.campwalden.ca

Summer Contact (June-September)	Winter Contact (October-May)
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Fax: 613-758-2427	416-736-9971
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Toronto, Ont. M3J 2T7
President: Alex Voihanski
Tel: 416-665-1836
Fax: 416-665-1837
Website: www.chailifesports.com
Chai Life Sports is a non-profit organization with over two decades of professional experience in amateur sports. We feature sports leagues that will make sports a positive experience for your child. Our soccer, softballs & T-Ball leagues begin in May 2009. For more information please see our website.

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Toronto, Ont. M3C 1N9
Director: Eric Shendelman
Tel: 416-444-9595
Website: www.crestwoodcamp.com
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Fax: 905-326-9215
E-mail: info@elitecamps.com
Website: www.elitecamps.com
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Tel: 416-638-6910
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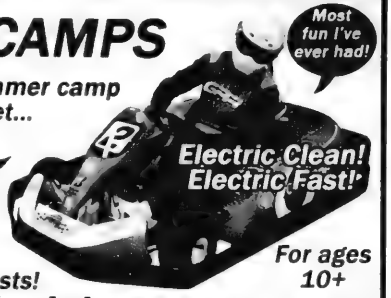

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B'nai Brith of Ottawa's program is balanced between athletics and the arts offering a number of different activities such as drama, dance, arts & crafts, music, many sports and a variety of long-standing "all camp" programs such as Grey Cup/Super Bowl, World Cup and Colour War. Being located on the Ottawa River, watersports are the pride and joy of our program. They include: waterskiing (4 waterski boats), wakeboarding, kayaking, canoeing, sailing and a canoe-tripping program that takes place amidst the beauty and diversity of Algonquin Park. Campers receive swim instruction in the Olympic-sized heated pool from qualified swim instructors using the curriculum of the Lifesaving Society. Our facilities include an indoor gym, dance studio, recreation hall, 4 lighted tennis courts, 2 outdoor basketball courts, 3 playing fields, and an on site health center which has fully qualified medical staff.

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ACCREDITED MEMBER OCA

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OCA Ontario Camps Association

www.campnbb.com
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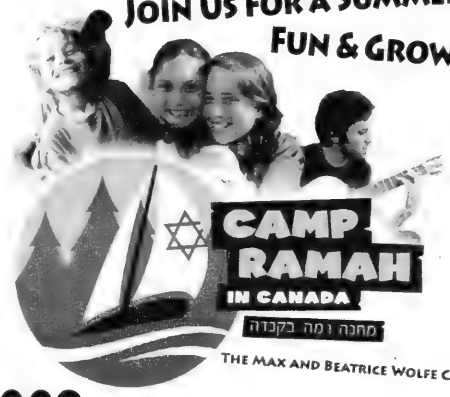

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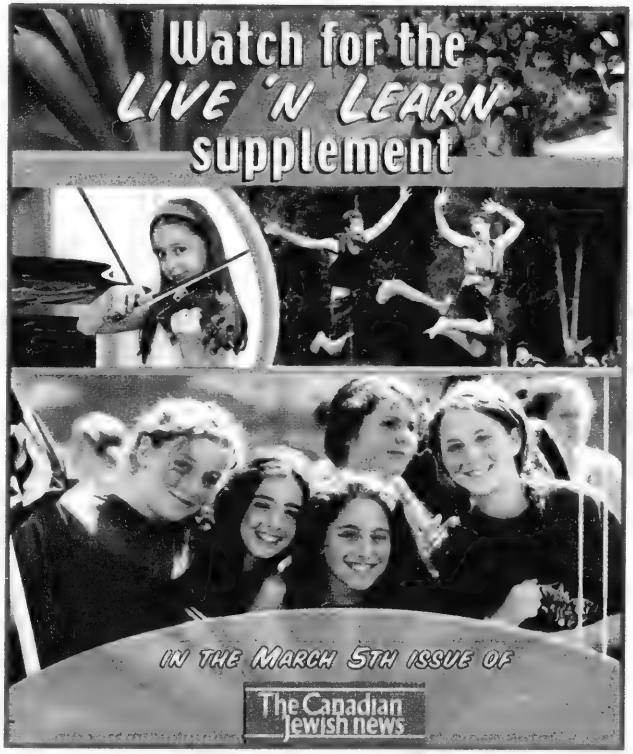

IN THE MARCH 5TH ISSUE OF The Canadian Jewish news

Camp Kadimah – Generations of Memories

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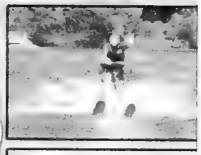

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Troop pullout begins after tentative truce

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd

JERUSALEM — The Israel Defence Forces was gradually withdrawing grounds forces from the Gaza Strip on Monday, following a tentative truce with Hamas that allowed Palestinians to take stock of the devastating three-week war.

Troops and tanks that had poured into Gaza on Jan. 3 as part of an offensive to counter Palestinian rocket attacks began pulling out on Sunday evening, though the army said they remained ready to tackle any flare-ups in fighting.

Israeli officials have said that troops would withdraw completely before Barack Obama's inauguration on Tuesday as the new U.S. president. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the plan has not been publicly announced.

Government spokesperson Mark Regev would not confirm the timetable. He said only that if Gaza remains quiet Israel's departure would be almost immediate.

Early morning of Jan. 19, IDF troops are seen leaving the Gaza strip after Israel declared a ceasefire on Saturday. *[Yossi Zamir/Flash90 photo]*

Israel and Hamas separately declared ceasefires on Sunday, to the relief of western powers that, while publicly sympathetic to Israel's security concerns, were alarmed by the mounting humanitarian toll in the impoverished territory.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Sunday that Israel does not intend to keep a military presence inside the Gaza Strip, nor does it aim to reconquer the territory, despite its three-week offensive on the Hamas-ruled coastal enclave.

He told European leaders visiting Jerusalem on Sunday evening that in the wake of the ceasefire, Israel planned to withdraw all of its troops as soon as possible. He said that such a move would come when the situation between Israel and Gaza was "stable."

As Palestinians emerged from hiding, agape at the killing of more than 1,300 fellow Gazans and at the widespread destruction of homes and government infrastructure, the head of the Hamas administration claimed a "popular victory" against Israel.

"The enemy has failed to achieve its goals," Ismail Haniyeh said in a speech.

Hamas's truce decision, conditioned on Israel withdrawing within a week, was "wise and responsible," he said.

Though some 20 rockets struck the Negev on Sunday amid truce declarations, Olmert declared the mission accomplished — noting a flurry of diplomatic efforts by the United States, Egypt and European countries to prevent Hamas rearming.

That would mean as yet unspecified measures to stop Hamas smuggling weapons across the Egypt-Gaza frontier, a sensitive matter given Cairo's past efforts to play down its scope.

Public Security Minister Avi Dichter threatened a military response to any renewed flow of arms into the Gaza Strip, saying Israel would view such smuggling as an attack on its territory.

"That means, if smuggling is renewed, Israel will view it as if it were fired upon," Dichter told Israel Radio.

For now, Gaza's situation looks much as it did before the conflict – armed standoff and a dim future for the 1.5 million people fenced inside the strip by a blockade aimed at punishing Islamist Hamas for rocket fire and ambitions to destroy Israel.

According to the Palestinian Statistics Bureau, some 4,000 residential buildings were reduced to rubble during the conflict. Western diplomats have said it could cost at least $1.6 billion to repair the infrastructure damage in Gaza.

Hamas officials, during talks with Egyptian mediators, said the faction demanded the opening of all Gaza's border crossings for the entry of materials, food, goods and basic needs.

Meanwhile, Israel announced on Monday that it would allow 200 trucks carrying humanitarian aid to enter Gaza, Israel Radio reported.

In Israel, which lost 10 troops in combat and three civilians to rocket attacks, the offensive was popular, and bolstered the prospects of Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Defence Minister Ehud Barak before a Feb. 10 election.

Yet opinion polls still predict an easy win for right-wing opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu, who had opposed Israel's 2005 withdrawal from Gaza after 38 years, arguing that it would embolden hardline Palestinian Islamists.

Though much of the international community shuns Hamas, it has strong grassroots support and Gaza's suffering threatened to sap the credibility of Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and his efforts to negotiate peace with Israel.

Israel preparing for Iran bid to rearm Hamas in Gaza

By AMOS HAREL AND AVI ISSACHAROFF
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Analysis

A long column of Israel Defence Forces infantrymen made its way back to Israeli territory from Gaza on Sunday morning. A number of the officers remembered a similar march in August 2006, from southwest Lebanon back to Israel.

The paratroopers held Israeli flags this time, too. But this time, the feelings were not those of bitterness or missed opportunities, but of satisfaction. From the IDF's point of view – from Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi to battle-tested privates – it fulfilled its mission. If the government had ordered the IDF to conquer all of Gaza, it would have fulfilled this mission, too.

In the field, a minimal number of ground forces have been left behind to control key positions until the final order is given to leave Gaza completely. This apparently won't take much time. Hamas also understands this. Its announcement Sunday that it would agree to an immediate ceasefire if the IDF finishes its withdrawal within a week was co-ordinated in advance with Egypt. Cairo forced Hamas to make the announcement, promising in return that by the end of the week there would be no more Israeli soldiers in Gaza.

The IDF, however, will continue to amass conscript troops along the Gaza-Israel border, as a threat. Some reservists will be released from duty in the coming days, if rocket fire against Israel does indeed diminish. On Sunday evening, the IDF General Staff believed that smaller Palestinian militant groups in Gaza were responsible for the last rockets launched into Israel, and that Hamas and Islamic Jihad are interested in stabilizing the ceasefire. If substantial rocket fire continues, however, Israel will respond harshly.

As IDF troops have left Gaza City, their positions have been taken by Hamas police, who have been sent into the streets. The deployment of police, dozens of whom were killed in the Israeli Air Force bombing of a cadets' graduation ceremony on the first day of the offensive, was meant to show that Hamas has survived the Israeli assault. But this claim is far from true. Hamas' capabilities are limited, and its regime is only partially functioning. On the other hand, the group's military wing still has enough armed men to deter the rival Fatah movement from attempting a coup in the coastal territory.

The real condition of Hamas will soon become clear. Khaled Meshal, the group's Damascus-based politburo chief, admitted that it had suffered "a harsh blow," but he also claimed "the resistance has not been defeated." It will now take a week to estimate the quality of Israeli deterrence against Hamas. In its announcement Sunday, Hamas said it expected Gaza's border crossings to be opened for the flow of humanitarian goods. This is a critical point for Hamas, one that led it to reject a truce agreement exactly one month ago.

The problem is even more pressing since Israel has seemingly disabled a large number of smuggling tunnels running through the Gaza-Egypt border. The tunnels were not only used to smuggle weapons, but also basic goods, such as petrol, food and cigarettes. In light of the economic hardship in Gaza, Hamas is still likely to renew the rocket fire next week if the crossings aren't opened. Israel is aware of this and the defence establishment is hinting there may be a more lenient policy toward the crossings, if total quiet is indeed enforced in Gaza.

When Hamas estimates the balance of gains and losses in the war, it can still point to one or two achievements. On a military level, it didn't succeed in causing substantial losses to the IDF, despite its threats, but it did preserve a capability to launch rockets until the last day of the campaign. In the international realm, it received significant public support from Arab states. European recognition of the Hamas regime is continuing to be established, and the Italian foreign minister is expected to visit Gaza. The Palestinian representative at the Arab summit at Doha was Meshal, not Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Continued on page 36

Sarkozy urges all sides to restart peace talks

Continued from page 1

None of the European leaders condemned Israel for these casualties.

After the meeting, Olmert said that Israel would soon withdraw its troops from Gaza.

At a press conference on Sunday, Sarkozy vowed that the European Union would never harm the security of Israel.

Sarkozy said that France would be willing to provide monitors to prevent arms smuggling into Gaza and supply technology to help locate smuggling tunnels.

The French leader urged Israelis and Palestinians to restart peace talks as soon as possible after the Israel Defence Forces withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and called for a summit with the Palestinian Authority to discuss the peace process.

Sarkozy said that IDF soldier Gilad Schalit, who has been held captive by Gaza militants since a cross-border raid in 2006, must be released, adding that he was certain Israel would be willing to free Palestinian prisoners in exchange.

After the Sharm summit, Sarkozy stressed the need for Israel to quickly pull its forces out of Gaza, after three weeks of an offensive on the Hamas-ruled territory.

"Israel should state immediately and clearly that if rocket fire will stop, the Israeli army will leave Gaza. There is no other solution to achieve peace," Sarkozy said.

Merkel said that Israel has the right to live in peace and not under threats. The German leader added that arms smuggling into Gaza, whether by sea or by land, must be prevented and that Germany was willing to help address that matter if necessary.

Brown said that the European Union will do everything to support the ceasefire, as a step toward achieving a comprehensive peace.

The British prime minister called on Hamas to stop firing rockets on Israel and expressed willingness to help in the effort to stop weapons smuggling into Gaza. He urged Israel to open the border crossings into the coastal strip and to allow humanitarian aid in as soon as possible.

Berlusconi said that he was proud of the fact that it was he who put Hamas on the EU's list of terrorist organizations. He promised that that he would work toward inducting Israel as a full member of the EU.

The Italian leader expressed willingness to provide military personnel to battle arms smuggling into Gaza. "When I heard about the rocket fire at Israel, I felt that it was a danger to Italy, and to the entire West," he said.

Zapatero, who had never visited Israel before Sunday, joined his colleagues in voicing his support for Israel, despite the harsh criticism he had expressed toward Israel during the three-week operation in Gaza. "I am moved that the ceasefire was announced when I came to Israel," the Spanish prime minister said, adding that he hoped for a renewal of the peace process.

Nicolas Sarkozy speaks at a meeting with European leaders to discuss the situation in Gaza. *[Olivier Fitoussi /FLASH90 photo]*

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite our readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes. Stories should not exceed 2,000 words.

We must receive your submissions no later than Friday, March 12. E-mail submissions are preferred, but works can also be sent by mail or brought to our office.

E-mail: **info@cjnews.com.** Mail: 1500 Don Mills Rd., Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4.

Submissions will *not* be returned. Only writers whose work is chosen for publication will be contacted.

CJN Purim Art Contest

It's time again for our annual **Purim Art Contest**.

Who can enter: Children in grades 1 to 6 inclusive are eligible. The children of *CJN* employees are not eligible.

Prizes: The judges will choose one drawing from two different students in each grade. These "winning" drawings will be published in *The CJN*'s 2009 Purim Poster. In addition, each of the 12 children whose drawings have been selected will receive a cheque for $25.

How to enter: You may submit as many drawings as you want. However, they should not be too small nor too large. Please paint or draw bright, bold, colourful pictures. You may use markers, crayons, paint or pencils. Please send us your name, address, phone number, age and grade along with your drawings.

You may mail or deliver your drawings to: *CJN* Community Contests, The Canadian Jewish News, 1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4. If you want us to return the pictures to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, we will be unable to do so.

The contest closes at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2009. We will undoubtedly receive many wonderful submissions from children all across the country. But only 12 of the drawings will be chosen as the "winners." The judges will base their decisions on a number of factors such as: the use of colour, the imaginative quality of the drawing and the way it tells an aspect of the story of Purim. The judges' decisions will be final. The chances of winning depend upon the number and quality of submissions received.

How the winner will be announced: The children whose pictures are chosen will be notified by telephone before the start of Shabbat on Friday, February 20, 2009.

When the prizes will be awarded: The "winning" pictures will be published in *The CJN* of March 5, 2009. Have fun and good luck.

Any litigation respecting the conduct and awarding of a prize in this contest may be submitted to the Régie des Loteries et courses du Québec.

Two countries cut ties with Israel

JTA

CARACAS — Bolivia and Venezuela have cut diplomatic ties with Israel over Israel's operation in Gaza.

Bolivian President Evo Morales said he also would ask that the World Criminal Court charge Israeli leaders with genocide, according to media reports.

"The Israeli government's crimes affect global stability and peace and have returned the world to the worst stage of crimes against humanity that we hadn't seen except in World War II and in the last years in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda," Morales said.

The Israeli government said Jan. 14 it had not yet been notified by the Bolivian government of its decision to end diplomatic relations.

Venezuela officially broke off diplomatic relations several hours after the Bolivian announcement. The official announcement follows the Jan. 6 expulsion of Israel's ambassador to Caracas and seven embassy staff members by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, a close ally of Morales.

A statement released Jan. 14 by the Venezuelan foreign ministry said the country "has decided to break off diplomatic relations with the state of Israel given the inhumane persecution of the Palestinian people," according to reports.

B'nai B'rith International (BBI) called Bolivia's decision a "troubling development in the region," noting that "Bolivia has enjoyed excellent relations with Israel for many years" and that the two countries have several co-operative programs.

"It is noteworthy that this announcement was made a day after Morales met with an Iranian delegation headed by Iranian Minister of Co-operation Mohammad Abbasi," BBI said in a statement. "Iran has been trying to expand its influence in Latin America for years, and this episode only underscores Morales' willingness to co-operate with the Iranian government that sponsors terror worldwide and has one of the worst human rights records in the world."

Israel prepares for Iran bid to rearm Hamas

Continued from page 35

The war in Gaza and the Doha summit on it, however, showed the internal divisions in the Arab world. An alliance of moderates – Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the PA – leads a strategic line against Hamas. This pragmatic Arab camp knows the real battle is being fought against Iran, which wishes to undermine Mideast stability and weaken moderate regimes. In this fight, Tehran doesn't intend to neglect its Palestinian project, even if it encountered the most serious threat to its existence in recent weeks.

All the intelligence assessments in Israel indicate that Iran seeks to rearm Hamas with rockets and will aspire to widen their range so as to be able to hit Tel Aviv. Egypt, whose President Hosni Mubarak has already defined a Hamas state in Gaza as an Iranian satellite that has grown on its doorstep, has a considerable interest in preventing the group's re-armament. Is Cairo's stated desire and the new Israel-U.S. agreement enough to curb the smuggling and prevent another escalation? Opinion in Israel is split, but this will be the key question in light of which the Gaza campaign's success will be determined.

Canada alone in opposing UN vote against Israel

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Canada is being commended for standing alone to oppose a "one-sided" UN resolution critical of Israel in its war against Hamas.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) voted 33-1 with 13 abstentions on a resolution that called for a halt to military attacks in Gaza and an immediate Israeli withdrawal. The resolution also branded Israel's military operation an "aggression" that had "resulted in massive violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people and systematic destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure."

Hillel Neuer

The resolution, passed last week during the council's ninth special session, also called for the "dispatch of an urgent independent international fact-finding mission to investigate all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by the occupying power against the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory."

"Canada has to be commended for taking the position it did at the UNHRC," said Moshe Ronen, chair of the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC), the Jewish community's advocacy arm for Israel. "The resolution was unfair at the least and a farce at best. There was no mention of Hamas and its ongoing attacks. It pointed the finger at Israel."

Hillel Neuer, executive director of UN Watch, a Geneva-based organization that monitors United Nations' actions on human rights, said, "Canada showed courage and leadership in defending the principle of human rights and in opposing unfair attacks by the Islamic and Arab countries to legitimize Hamas and grant impunity to Hamas. The resolution ignored the suffering of one million Israeli civilians who are under constant rocket fire. Canada is to be saluted for its moral leadership."

Prior to casting the opposing vote, Marius Grinius, Canada's representative at the UNHRC, said "the draft text still failed to clearly recognize that rocket fire on Israel had led to the current crisis. It also used unnecessary, unhelpful and inflammatory language."

Israel's representative, Aharon Leshno-Yaar, quoted former UN secretary general Kofi Annan asking whether all the UN resolutions and conferences had provided any tangible benefits to the Palestinians.

Furthermore, "in the real world, there could be no meaningful consensus without Israel. The current resolution was not balanced and did not reflect the realities in the Gaza Strip and did no service to the cause of peace or to the human suffering of Palestinians in Gaza… Such a resolution would only embolden Hamas and weaken the trust of the Israeli public in the United Nations and the council," Leshno-Yaar said.

Moshe Ronen

The Palestinian representative, Ibrahim Khraishi, said "the open wound that the Palestinian people had suffered had been offered at the altar of the Human Rights Council, and it was hoped this would be remedied… The barbaric acts of aggression required the calling for the establishment of a fact-finding mission to investigate Israeli slaughters and acts of terror."

The resolution was supported by a host of Asian and African states – most of them dictatorships – that were joined by Argentina, India, Mexico, Nicaragua, Philippines and Russia.

European Union countries abstained, along with Cameroon, Japan and South Korea.

Ronen called the Europeans' stance "a gutless position to take. Hamas and Islamic organizations threaten countries that don't oppose Israel and support Hamas in their terrorist activities. The Europeans were cowed and browbeaten by these threats."

Canadian minister visits Mumbai

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

While Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney was on his week-long trip to Pakistan and India earlier this month, he expressed Canada's solidarity with the victims of the Mumbai terror attacks in November and visited the Chabad House that was the scene of brutal murder.

Speaking in a teleconference call from New Delhi last week, Kenney said that among the many meetings he had with various politicians in both Pakistan and India, he met with the Pakistani prime minister, foreign minister and national security adviser to "emphasize Canada's expectation that Pakistan would co-operate fully with Indian authorities investigating and bringing to justice any and all responsible for the Nov. 26 attacks in Mumbai."

Jason Kenney

More than 170 people died in the attacks on hotels, tourist hot spots and the Chabad House in Mumbai, including two Canadians and nine Jews. The directors of the Chabad House, Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg and his wife, Rivka, were among the murdered.

Kenney said he travelled to Mumbai last week to visit the Taj Mahal hotel – one of the targets in the attacks – to sign a condolence book and to meet the staff on duty when the terrorists struck.

He also spoke of his opportunity to pay his respects to the Mumbai Jewish community at the historic Blue Synagogue, where he addressed a gathering that included Canadian and German consulate representatives.

"I met the remarkably diverse Mumbai Jewish community that has a remarkable multicultural makeup," he said.

"I gave a speech to some 100 people there expressing Canada's solidarity with the people of India, the people of Mumbai, and particularly, the Jewish community following the terrible events of Nov. 26 to the 29th."

Kenney added that he was also given a tour of the Chabad House by two Canadian Chabadniks, Menachem Sputz and Mendel Kessler.

"I was shown the premises, all five floors, by two remarkable young Canadian members of the Chabad movement who were dispatched to help the community in the wake of the murder of the rabbi [and his wife] during the attacks," Kenney said.

"It was a deeply moving experience, unsettling and disturbing at the same time, to see the incredible devastation and violence that came to that house of peace and prayer, and that is something I certainly will never forget."

WJC plenary set for Israel

Compiled by CJN Staff

NEW YORK — The 13th Plenary Assembly of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) takes place on Jan. 26 and 27 in Jerusalem.

The WJC represents Jewish communities in more than 80 countries around the globe. The 13th plenary assembly's motto is, "We stand by Israel."

More than 400 representatives of Jewish communities are expected to attend the meeting. The plenary assembly is the highest decision-making body of the WJC and meets every four years.

Founded in Geneva in 1936, the WJC serves as the diplomatic arm of the Jewish people to governments and international organizations.

Apart from elections for WJC president and executive officers, delegates will also discuss the military conflict in Gaza and other threats against Israel, as well as the repercussions for Jewish communities around the world, notably the related surge in anti-Semitism.

WJC president Ronald Lauder said: "At this meeting, we want to give the people of Israel our full support and show them that they are not alone in the face of attacks by militant Islamists which threaten the very existence of the State of Israel."

Debates on other international developments, such as the recent Mumbai terror attacks, efforts to delegitimize Israel in international bodies, and the situation in Venezuela are also on the agenda.

On Jan. 27, delegates mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day in a special ceremony at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial institution in Jerusalem.

Senior Israeli politicians, including Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Diaspora Affairs Minister Yitzhak Herzog, Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu and Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat will address the plenary assembly.

Will Return Next Week

Go to cjnews.com for up-to-date news on Israel

Defiance tells a Holocaust story of survival and courage

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The Bielski brothers were heroes and role models in the deepest sense of the word. During the Holocaust, when the darker side of human nature manifested itself day by day, they fought back ferociously and behaved selflessly.

At the end of 1941, after their parents were murdered by the Nazis in eastern Poland, they formed a partisan band and lived off the land. The Bielskis could have left it at that and concerned themselves solely with self-preservation. Instead, they risked their lives by inviting other Jews, hunted relentlessly by the Nazis and their collaborators, to join their encampment in the depths of the forest.

Historian Nechama Tec wrote a book about the Bielskis, and three years ago, the History Channel broadcast a documentary about them. Edward Zwick, director of Blood Diamond, has followed suit with Defiance, which opened last week.

Starring Daniel Craig –the new James Bond – as Tuvia, one of the brothers, Defiance is aptly titled. The Bielskis are strong, resolute and courageous, and if they must die, they will go down fighting a ruthless enemy. In the film, appropriately enough, they are likened to the ancient Maccabee warriors, who fought for the Jewish people's freedom.

Tuvia Bielski (Daniel Craig) stars in Defiance.

At more than 130 minutes, Defiance might seem excessively long, but in fact it is not and it flows smoothly. And thankfully, it seems historically accurate.

The movie opens with an unusual flourish. Documentary footage of Adolf Hitler stiffly stretching out his arm during one of his ranting speeches dissolves into what appears to be file footage of Nazis rounding up Jews.

This, in turn, fades into Defiance as the two elder Bielskis, Tuvia and Zus (Liev Schreiber), reach their parents' farm and discover they have been murdered. The youngest brother, Asael (Jamie Bell), has survived the massacre.

A Polish peasant who has hidden Jews in his barn informs the Bielskis that the killer is the local police chief. Seeking vengeance, Tuvia tracks him down, coolly shooting him in the presence of his wife and two sons.

When the Polish farmer is no longer able to hide Jews, Tuvia takes them under his wing. Zus protests, saying they are short of food, but Tuvia prevails. Tuvia and Zus also disagree on another matter. Zus, hot-headed, is eager to kill Germans, but Tuvia is more restrained. "We must not become like them," he says.

Yet restraint goes only so far. Eventually, Tuvia participates in retaliatory attacks on collaborators and German patrols. Zwick handles these scenes expertly, creating high tension.

The film is also good at portraying the life and the hardships the partisans endured in the forest.

The Bielski camps, comprising dugouts, bunkers and household structures, were quite sophisticated, given the scarcity of supplies. Yet the partisans suffered from hunger and disease, particularly in winter.

To ease the pain, the men took "forest wives," hooking up with women who sought protection. Tuvia's love interest is played by Alexa Davalos.

Zus ends up joining a Red Amy partisan unit. The Soviet commander is surprised by Zus' combative spirit. "Jews do not fight," he says, echoing an anti-Semitic stereotype. "These Jews do," retorts Zus.

But even as they prove themselves on the battlefield, Jewish fighters embedded with the Red Army encounter grassroots anti-Semitism, which the Russian commander downplays at first.

Certainly, Tuvia demolishes all anti-Semitic myths about Jews. As he sits on a white stallion, resplendent on the saddle, a Jewish boy can hardly believe what he sees. "He is a Jew?" he asks his mother rather incredulously.

As Defiance unfolds, Tuvia grows still stronger and tougher. When a man sharply questions his authority, he shoots him and orders his corpse to be placed in the woods for the wolves.

There are several riveting sequences, and one of the best is a battle scene in which Tuvia's partisans confront a German division spearheaded by a tank.

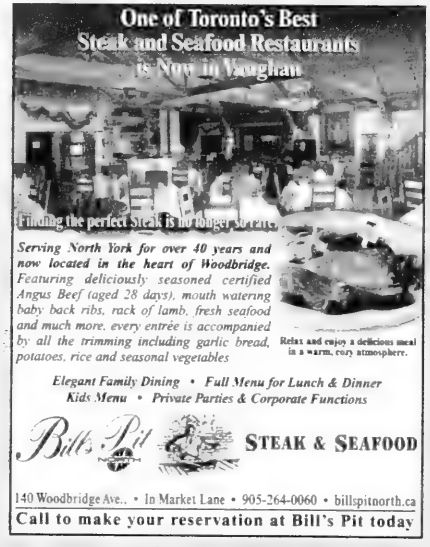
In yet another unforgettable scene, the Jews in the Bielski camp fall upon a captured German soldier who, in vain, pleads for mercy.

Defiance is never less than interesting, but generally, it is not as gripping as it might have been.

Nonetheless, the cast is uniformly excellent, and Craig and Schreiber are especially effective in their respective roles.

Despite its weaknesses, Defiance tells an important story and tells it reasonably well.

Dining Pleasures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TV series examines life-cycle rites

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Rites of Passage is a new television series that examines key life-cycle moments in many different cultures.

Unfortunately, to see it, you have to subscribe to high-definition television service, as the series is available exclusively on Equator HD (Rogers 550, Bell TV 812), one of several HD-only channels.

Each of the series' 13 half-hour episodes, examines the four common human experiences of birth, coming of age, marriage and death in various religions.

One of the first episodes is on death and looks at the Jewish chevra kadisha, the groups of men or women who prepare the body for ritual burial, as well as Hindu and Taoist death rituals.

Mark Kachuck with his father at his bar mitzvah

Moshe Posner belongs to a chevra kadisha. In the show, he explains how out of respect there is no talking allowed in the room, except for prayers. He explains the symbolism of the white linen used for the shroud, the buckets of water and why twigs are stuck between the corpse's thumb and index finger.

Unfortunately, this scene, shot in a room where the ritual is performed, does not take advantage of the high definition.

The colourful scenes of the Hindu and Taoist death rituals, on the other hand, are truly remarkable.

Another episode compares the Catholic sacrament of confirmation with the bar mitzvah ceremony.

On his 13th Hebrew birthday, Mark Kachuck, like other Jewish young people, becomes a bar mitzvah. We see him at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto, reading from the Torah with his friends and family.

At around the same age, Catholic children in Grade 8 celebrate their confirmation, which commemorates the spiritual journey from childhood to adulthood.

Upcoming shows look at the brit milah ceremony, compare Jewish and Muslim wedding ceremonies and examine Hindu, African, Aboriginal and other life-cycle rites.

In examining these rituals, Rites of Passage does a great job of creating understanding between different cultures and shows the differences, and at times, similarities, among various religious ceremonies.

Rites of Passage airs Thursday evenings at 8 p.m.

Mervon Mehta to join Royal Conservatory administration

The Royal Conservatory of Music has announced that Mervon Mehta will be its new executive director of performing arts as of April 1.

The actor, artist and acclaimed arts administrator will be responsible for all aspects of the Royal Conservatory's performing arts business, including programming and managing Koerner Hall, the new 1,140-seat concert hall scheduled to open this fall.

"I am absolutely thrilled to be joining the Royal Conservatory team," Mehta said.

Mehta hails from an impressive musical family. He is the son of conductor Zubin Mehta and voice teacher Carmen Mehta. His grandfather, Mehli Mehta, was a conductor and founder of the Bombay Symphony Orchestra, and his uncle Zarin Mehta is the executive director of the New York Philharmonic.

Mehta returns to Toronto from Philadelphia, where he's been serving as vice-president of programming and education at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts since 2002.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

WINCHEVSKY CENTRE HOSTS CABARET NIGHT OF YIDDISH AND BROADWAY FAVOURITES

Soprano **Miriam Eskin**, star of Russian and Israeli musical theatre, headlines a cabaret evening of Yiddish and Broadway favourites, accompanied by pianist-arranger **Nina Shapilsky** and bass vocalist **Herman Rombouts**.

A benefit concert for the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, the evening also includes complimentary refreshments, a silent auction, displayed artworks and a cash bar. $25. Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave. (five blocks north of Lawrence, just east of Bathurst St.). Saturday, Jan. 24, 8 p.m. Doors open 7:30. For advance tickets, call 416-789-5502 or e-mail info@winchevskycentre.org.

* * *

Music of Erich Korngold: The Art of Time Ensemble presents Source & Inspiration III, a celebration of the musical genius of **Erich Korngold**, with original songs by **Danny Michel**, **John Southworth** and **Martin Tielli**.

The Austrian-born Korngold (1897-1957), whom **Gustav Mahler** once described as a "musical genius," was a brilliant romantic composer. Fortuitously, Warner Brothers summoned him to Hollywood in 1938 to write a film score; he would later say The Adventures of Robin Hood saved his life. Winner of an Academy Award, he is known for his beautifully moving scores for Hollywood films of the 1930s and '40s and is frequently credited with the invention of the modern film score.

The evening of classical and contemporary music begins with artistic director **Andrew Burashko** performing a Korngold Suite on piano, accompanied by violins and cello. Musical arrangements are by Toronto composers **Jonathan Goldsmith** and **Robert Carli**, with accompaniment by Art of Time Ensemble musicians. CBC Radio Two plans to record the concert for later broadcast. Adults $39. Harbourfront Centre Enwave Theatre, 231 Queen's Quay W. Jan. 29 and 30, 8 p.m. 416-973-4000. www. artoftimeensemble.com

* * *

Lionel Gelber Prize: A short list of five finalists for the 2009 Lionel Gelber Prize has been announced by **Noah Rubin**, chair of the prize board and grandnephew of the Canadian scholar, author and diplomat for whom the prize is named. The award is given annually by the Lionel Gelber Foundation in partnership with the Munk Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto and Washington-based Foreign Policy magazine.

The books, chosen from more than 200 submissions, examine the challenges of war, terrorism, international crime, grand strategy, and a rapidly changing global power structure. The winner will be announced on March 10 and the prize presented in Toronto on March 31.

The finalists are: "How the Power Struggle Between China, India and Japan Will Shape Our Next Decade," by **Bill Emmott-Rivals**; "A Choice of Enemies: America Confronts the Middle East," by **Lawrence Freedman**; "McMafia: A Journey Through the Global Criminal Underworld," by **Misha Glenny**; "Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia," by **Ahmed Rashid;** and "The Post-American World," by **Fareed Zakaria**.

* * *

Ralph Benmergui

Film Screenings

• NFB Mediatheque presents Flipping Out (2008), Israeli director **Yoav Shamir's** close-up look at former soldiers of the Israeli army as they follow a strange post-military odyssey. $6, $4. Tuesday, Jan. 27, 7 p.m. 150 John St. at Richmond Street. 416-973-3012, www.nfb.ca/mediatheque

• The Toronto Jewish Film Festival is holding its first Chai Tea and a Movie screening in Richmond Hill, offering families the opportunity to have a fun-filled afternoon. The film is Zone Libre (Free Land), directed by **Christophe Malavoy**. $15. Silver City Richmond Hill, 8725 Yonge St. Sunday, Feb. 1. Tea at 1 p.m., film at 2 p.m. 416-967-1528. tjff@tjff.ca. In honour of its 17th anniversary, the festival is giving free pairs of tickets, for either the Feb. 1 or a March 1 screening, to the first 17 people who e-mail them.

• Kolel and Mongrel Media screen the second of three provocative films in a series dealing with religious issues. My Father, My Lord, a film "about Jewish fundamentalists," was previously screened at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival. Camera Bar, 1028 Queen St. W. (at Ossington Avenue); lively discussions to follow. $5 at the door. Sunday, Feb. 1, 7 p.m.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company and Women's College Hospital Foundation present award-winning writer and social activist **Michele Landsberg** in Conversations on the Green, with host **Ralph Benmergui**. $10, $15. St. Lawrence Centre, Jane Mallet Theatre, 27 Front St. E. Sunday, Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m. 416-366-7723, www. hgjewishtheatre.com

• Smouldering Masterpiece Theatre presents comedian **Deb Filler** in Well, I'll Tell Ya, directed by **Louise Fagan**. $25. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre, Jan. 29 and 31 at 8 p.m., Feb. 1 at 3 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org

* * *

At the Galleries: A new art exhibit curated by **Moses Znaimer**, featuring his "new vision of aging for Canada," goes on view this week at the Propeller Centre for the Visual Arts. The exhibit features works by **Jim Bourke**, **Joan Kaufman**, **Margie Kelk**, **Christopher McNulty**, **Faye Mullen**, **Joseph Muscat**, **Rochelle Rubinstein**, **Michelle Salter** and **Myriam Van Neste**. Until Feb. 1. Opening reception Thursday, Jan. 22, 7 to 10 p.m. 984 Queen St. W. 416-504-7142, www.propellerctr.com

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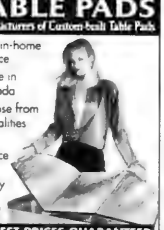

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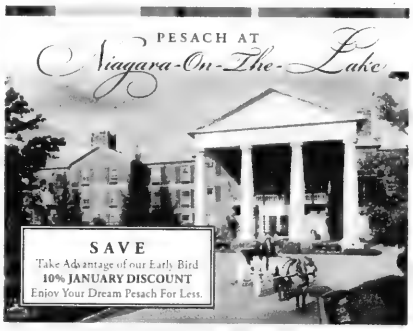

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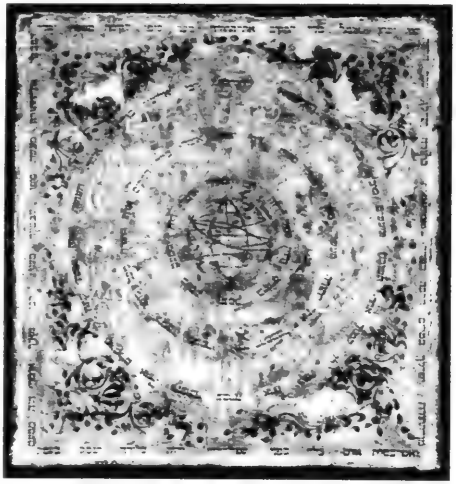
Artist combines anatomy and Hebrew text

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Myriam Nafte is one very busy artist. She can hardly keep up with the demand for her work at Jewish museums and galleries across North America.

She says she's relieved that many of her shows are booked a year or two ahead because "it takes a lot of labour to build up the collection."

Right now, she has an exhibition at the Fine Museum at Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco, and she's finalizing dates for shows in Pittsburgh, Connecticut and New York City.



Fulfilled, one of Myriam Nafte's paintings

Despite these commitments, Nafte has, since 2007, been allocating a number of her works for an annual fundraiser for the Downtown Jewish Community School, which her daughter and son attend.

She is donating 50 per cent of the proceeds from her upcoming show, Mystics, Medics and Merchants, to the school. The show opens 11 a.m. on Jan. 25 in the Jacobs Lounge at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre and runs until March 8.

Nafte, who has a graduate degree in forensic anthropology, combines her knowledge of human anatomy and Hebrew text in her visual art. She incorporates precision drawing and Hebrew inscriptions with layers of acrylic paint – some are in metallic hues – that add texture and luminosity to her work.

Much of this work explores Hebrew letters as imagery, however, her upcoming show at Miles Nadal marks a new direction, she says. "I'm still integrating Hebrew text, but I'm integrating it into fabric of what individuals wore."

Nafte says she's concentrating on portraying people from the Middle Ages such as astronomers and medics, many of whom were Jewish. "The portraits are not facial, but the emphasis is more on what these individuals wore."

Nafte explains that from a distance, the letters in the piece, The Astronomer's Robe, look like a constellation of stars, but in a close-up view the stars are actually Hebrew and Greek lettering.

In this exhibition, she pays homage to the Jewish scientists of the Middle Ages. She notes that for 900 years, Hebrew was considered to be a scientific language. "Many scientific treatises were translated from Hebrew into Greek and Latin," she says.

The Toronto-based artist – she has studied human anatomy, skeletal biology and forensics – has been working as a full-time artist for more than 20 years. However, in the last 10 years, she has focused on Judaic art.

Raised in an Orthodox family, Nafte, 43, trained in Judaic art with her father, Max Bensabat, a retired commercial artist and a scribe. In 2000, she apprenticed with him to learn how to do halachicly correct Hebrew text.

"My father has been very supportive. He checks all my layouts and he looks for accuracy."

Nafte says she is grateful that her work has been so well received in the United States and Canada, but that means she has a tight work schedule to meet the demand.

"If you don't show, you don't exist. It's like publish or perish. I love being busy.

"My work may be labour intensive, but it is truly a labour of love."

Prayer, is one of the works on display at artist Myriam Nafte's latest show.

To view the works in Nafte's show at Miles Nadal, visit www.myriamnafte.com. For more information about the exhibit call 416-924-6211, ext. 112.

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Bestselling memoir recalls Jewish life in pre-WWI England

By BILL GLADSTONE
Special to The CJN

Harry Bernstein was 96 years old when his memoir, The Invisible Wall: A Love Story That Broke Barriers (Random House), was published to great critical acclaim two years ago. Last year, he followed up his success with a second memoir, The Dream (Random House), which similarly has attracted much favourable attention and legions of readers.

This year, at 98, he is hard at work on a third book. "I may never make it, but I'll do what I have always done. I will try," he has said

Remembered from his childhood, the period that Bernstein writes of in The Invisible Wall seems so remote to most of us as to be historical, yet his heart-wrenching prose brings it back to vivid life. He was a boy of four at the opening of the story, which is set in the pre-World War I era, and he is about 11 at its conclusion, just before the family was to immigrate to America.

The author with his wife Ruth, 1936

He was the youngest of five children (a sixth is born during the story) in a working-class family in a small mill town near Manchester, England. All the town's Jews live on one side of a small cobbled street, and Gentile families occupy all the houses on the other side. Between them is an invisible wall that regulates their relations and keeps them from getting too friendly with each other, being invited into each others' homes, or – except in rare circumstances – marrying into each others' families.

In dramatically spare prose, Bernstein paints a grimly realistic portrait of his impoverished family, headed by an anti-social drunkard father and a hard-working, heroically suffering mother. He recounts many adult conversations he heard as a young boy and expertly sketches the neighbourhood's leading personalities and landmarks such as schools, pubs, grocery stores and parks.

As young children, he and his brothers and sisters walked to school together to lessen the likelihood of becoming prey for bullies.

Anti-Semitic insults and assaults occur with regrettable frequency in the town and provide an ominous undertone to the story. In one incident, one of his older brothers is granted an interview for a job at a newspaper, then is kept waiting for more than an hour only to be told that no newspaper would ever hire him because he was a Jew.

"I'm doing you a favour telling you this," the man told him. "I'm going to save you a lot of time and trouble writing letters. We're a humanitarian country. We gave you people refuge when no other country would have you. But don't take advantage of it and start pushing yourselves into places where you aren't wanted. Stick to where you belong, in the tailoring shops and pawnshops and the markets. Remember that and you'll be all right."

Bernstein early family portrait

There are two ill-fated love stories in the book and 'arry, as our boy-narrator is usually called, plays a role in each. In the first, he carries notes in milk bottles from a young lady on his side of the street to her gentile beau on the other side, each time receiving a penny for him to spend on candy. When the young lady's parents discover her secret affair, they ship her to Australia. Eventually, her boyfriend joins the army, returns from the war horribly disfigured, and comes to a tragic end, right in front of Harry's eyes.

The second illicit love story occurs much closer to home. When Harry's older sister, Lily, falls in love with a promising young man named Arthur, the pair take great pains to hide their relationship by meeting in secret. Harry discovers them in the midst of a tryst in the park and is sworn to secrecy. But he senses that trouble lies ahead, since his parents have expressly forbidden such relations.

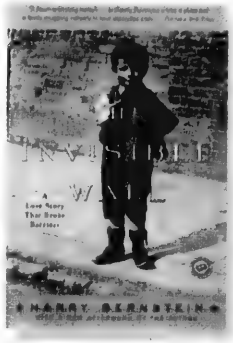
To make matters worse, Lily has rejected the interest shown by the town's young rabbi, a match that would have made her mother proud. When the truth emerges, mother and daughter are torn apart. The author's treatment of these characters is so sensitive and sympathetic that each new twist or revelation tears at the reader's heart as the domestic drama climbs to a crescendo of sadness.

Some readers may see in Bernstein's stark depiction of Jewish life in a provincial town a reflection of Magnolia Street, Louis Golding's 1932 novel of Jewish life in Manchester. That tale also presented a street divided down the middle with the Jews on one side and the gentiles on the other. The bestselling book was later made into a play as well as a motion picture, Magnolia Street Story.

A more current comparison seems equally apt: The Invisible Wall seems to bear strong affinities with Angela's Ashes, Frank McCourt's Pulitzer Prize-winning memoir of a decade ago. Both feature gray skies, a gritty town, grinding poverty, a useless alcoholic father, and a desperate mother whose situation ranges from grim to pathetic. McCourt, whose childhood memoir was set in Limerick, Ireland, during the Depression, followed up that first book with Tis, a memoir of the family's subsequent experiences in the supposed golden land of America.

Likewise, Bernstein has given us The Dream, an account of the family's arrival and early years in America. He is 12 years old when an anonymous benefactor sends the family steamship tickets to make the fabled crossing. In Chicago, where the family is met by relatives, the now-teenage narrator recounts his fascination with modern city life: the skyscrapers, cars and open vistas of Lake Michigan.

Although his happiness is curtailed by an involvement with the Chicago mob and by the lean and mean years of the 1930s, a singular high point for Bernstein was his own love relationship with Ruby, the woman who would become his wife. He became a journalist and script reader for a movie studio, and remained happily married for 67 years, until Ruby's death in 2002.



"What saved me in those terrible days without her was my writing," he explained in an afterword to The Imaginary Wall.

"I turned to it in desperation, seeking something that would take my mind off my loss. And it worked. I found in writing, a therapy that was soothing for the grief that I felt, and I chose a subject that was as far away from the present as I could possibly go: my childhood in England, and that little cobbled street that was divided into two parts, one Christian, one Jewish, and the people on both sides that I remembered so well."

Like Angela's Ashes, The Imaginary Wall will probably make a wonderful movie in the hands of the right producer and director. Hopefully, Bernstein will keep writing, and be allowed to enjoy the fruits of his labours, for some years to come.

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ESSIE SHER

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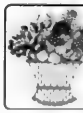

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The Canadian Jewish news

Greater Toronto Area

Rabbi says women's singing must be 'innocent'

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Rabbi David Bigman, rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Ma'ale Gilboa, thoroughly enjoys teaching, but he was a bit puzzled by the high praise he received from an audience member, following a *shiur* (lesson) he gave in the United States.

"All I did was teach one source," the rabbi said, adding that he didn't realize at first that the man wasn't talking about the content of the lecture.

"He just noticed that I was having fun," Rabbi Bigman said in a phone interview from his home in Israel.

Rabbi David Bigman

"Jewish learning has become very serious work," he said, adding that every rosh yeshiva he ever studied with – among them Rabbi Aaron Soloveitchik – enjoyed what they were doing. "You could see it in their faces, in their body language."

Rabbi Bigman, a 54-year-old Detroit native, who majored in economics at Wayne State University before making aliyah and going on to obtain his smichah at Machon Ariel (the Ariel Institute) in Haifa, will address some serious issues this weekend as a guest speaker for Torah in Motion.

On Saturday night, he will discuss the prohibitions on hearing a woman's voice (*kol ishah*) at an event being held in a private home.

Last year, Rabbi Bigman – who was the founder of one of the first women's yeshivot in Israel, at Kibbutz Ein Hanitziv – was consulted regarding the halachic acceptability of an Israeli religious school's custom of including female students as singers at ceremonial events. He wrote a responsum on the issue.

The situation at the Israeli school was reminiscent of one that arose in Toronto in 2006 when organizers of the annual community Yom Hashoah service decided – in deference to the city's Orthodox rabbinic organization, the Vaad Harabonim – not to include a mixed boy-girl choir on the program. As a result, the Toronto Board of Rabbis, most of whose members are Conservative and Reform, did not participate in nor endorse the event.

But Rabbi Bigman's responsum "doesn't solve the problem for people who don't accept the tshuvah [answer]," he said.

His responsum takes a "lenient" approach, relying on minority opinions to allow women to sing publicly in front of men under certain conditions.

Rabbi Bigman outlined five criteria that determine whether women's public singing is acceptable: context and appropriate atmosphere, the song's lyrics, the musical style, the singer's attire and body language.

He added that the same criteria would hold true for men singing in front of women, although that situation is not technically a matter of Jewish law.

The responsum states that leniency is permitted "when there is a clear sense that the listening is innocent and the singing is innocent."

As well, Rabbi Bigman told The CJN, there is a tradition of accepting minority opinions when a need arises. In this case, he felt there was a need because some women felt "slighted" by the prohibition on singing publicly, leading to an estrangement from Torah.

The move to the philosophical right in Orthodoxy that has become apparent in recent years, particularly in North America, is "new," said Rabbi Bigman, who was ordained 27 years ago.

"True Halachah is attentive to the needs of people," but that does not mean the law is always pliable, said the rabbi.

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Prince of ping-pong hopes for medal

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Sixteen-year-old Mitchell Billinkoff, who has been winning national medals in table tennis since he was 10, said he can't wait for the Maccabiah Games to begin in July.

Billinkoff will be the only Canadian competing in table tennis, and he's hopeful that he can bring home a medal.

"I have been to the North American Maccabi Junior Games three times before and have won a total of five gold medals, two silver and one bronze. The last time in 2007, I won three gold medals for singles, doubles and the team competition," he said.

Back home he's won his share of medals as well. At the Canadian National Junior Championships in 2007, Billinkoff won a silver in the boys 18-and-under team competition and a bronze in doubles with partner Fred Eng. This year, at the same tournament, he won a bronze medal in the boys 18-and-under team competition.

He's also won silver and bronze medals in singles play at the March 2008 STIGA Big Bang tournament in Montreal. He has been a member of the Manitoba provincial table tennis team for the past eight years and trains with provincial coach George Damianov.

Billinkoff began his venture into the sport much like other youngsters. About seven years ago, "I just fooled around playing with my parents in our basement. Then one day, my uncle found a flyer for a table tennis tournament in Manitoba and I entered and came in second in one of the age events. A provincial coach saw me playing and recruited me. When I was nine years old, I started playing for the Manitoba team," he said.

Mitchell Billinkoff

When Billinkoff was only 10, he entered the Canadian National Table Tennis Competition for the first time. "That was 2001 in Laval, [Que.,] and I won a bronze medal for mixed doubles," he said.

Although many people play Ping-Pong for amusement, Billinkoff said when played at a national and international level, the sport is as rigorous as any other. It demands a high degree of physical fitness and mental concentration.

He expects the competition at this summer's Maccabiah Games to be stiff.

"Table tennis is the number 1 sport in China, but there aren't not too many Jewish people in China… But all across Europe, table tennis is very popular, and there could be some very good players. Some of my friends from Australia who play the sport are trying out, so I'm not too sure what to expect," he said.

Billinkoff, a Grade 12 student at Winnipeg's Gray Academy of Jewish Education, said he's training hard.

"I started practising much more in the last couple of years. I practice five times a week for two and a half hours… My coach doesn't recommend that I play other racquet sports, because it might mess up my strokes for table tennis. He's not happy that I play badminton for my school team in the spring."

Named Manitoba Jewish Athlete of the Year in 2007, Billinkoff said he has considered training in China, since "everyone in China plays," but he hasn't gone "because of other commitments."

Having never been to Israel before, Billinkoff said he is especially looking forward to the Games' opening ceremonies. "I can't wait to see the opening Olympic-like ceremonies and [am excited by] the idea of walking into a stadium with thousands of people cheering."

Marilyn Billinkoff, Mitchell's mother, said, "My husband and I are planning to go to Israel to watch the Games. We were both there last when we were in our 20s, so it's time. This is a perfect opportunity."

Billinkoff will be going to Israel for a three-week school trip in May along with the rest of his graduating class, and he plans to take a break from training.

"After that, our idea is to try to have Mitchell stay in Israel until the Games in July," his mom said.

"We'll do that if he can line up accommodation, coaching and training in Israel. We're sure that there are good coaches there."

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A proportionate response

By YONI GOLDSTEIN

New Views

Critics of Israel's offensive in Gaza to neutralize the threat of Hamas rockets fired at the southern part of the country love to use the "proportionality" argument. This line of thinking goes as follows: considering that Hamas is merely lobbing inaccurate, small payload rockets, and considering that such rockets have only killed a handful of Israelis, Israel's military answer of precise, tactical air and artillery strikes, which are decimating Hamas' infrastructure and ranks, and are killing some innocent civilians as well, is too much.

You and I suspect that those who play the proportionality card are not out to make a straightforward correlative argument against Israeli aggression. Which is to say, this sort of reasoning is the tactic used exclusively by anti-Zionists and anti-Semites. Look around: no one else – even others opposed to Israel's Gaza campaign for one reason or another – dares utter the word. Indeed, no country at war – in the history of warfare – has been served with the accusation of fighting "disproportionately." Only Israel

To illustrate the sheer ridiculousness of the proportionality offence, let's, for a second, humour those who employ it.

To wit: what would a "proportionate" Israeli response to Hamas rocket attacks look like?

First, Israel would have to start using less explosive shells and bombs. This would make the destructive yield of both sides' weapons even. There would be no more air strikes, either – a proportionate response means exclusively using primitive, often homemade, bombs and unpredictable explosives.

Next, Israel would have to scrap its precision guiding systems. No more laser directives ensuring that missiles land where they should – which is to say, on the storerooms of Hamas rockets and the houses of Hamas terrorists. Losing the guidance systems would also mean that Israel would not be able to warn Palestinian civilians (and even some of the Hamas men it has targeted) to evacuate targeted spots.

This sort of Israeli response – strapping on a blindfold and hurling crude bombs at Gaza – would quite likely inflict more damage on innocent Palestinians than Israel's actual strategy (which puts Israeli soldiers at greater personal risk so as to lessen the risk of Palestinians dying in the crossfire). But at least it would be proportionate, right?

I'll guarantee you this much: if Israel was to adopt the proportionate response I've outlined, those who use the proportion argument would simply find a new way to make the mess in the Middle East the exclusive responsibility of the Jewish state.

Proportionality, we know, has nothing to do with what's going on in southern Israel and Gaza. Nor does it have anything to do with previous battles in Lebanon and the West Bank, or a possible future altercation with a nuclear Iran. It's an excuse to vilify Israel, plain and simple.

What's shameful is that so many – in the media and, more generally, on the centre-right – have taken the bait from proportionality mongers. Everyone should be able to see through such an illogical, nonsensical line of reasoning, yet so many are consciously, and infuriatingly, choosing not to.

So the next time you hear someone spouting off about Israel "disproportionate" response to Hamas' rocket campaign on southern Israel, I would urge you to try a different tack. Instead of talking about Israel's right to respond to an act of war, Hamas' use of human shields, UN conventions regarding the rules of warfare or the fact that Israeli soldiers are more at risk of injury and death due to Israel's humane war strategy, try to play by the proportionate crew's rules.

Paint them a clear picture of just what a proportionate Israeli response might look like: aimless, crude bombs hurtling toward unsuspecting Gaza Palestinians who won't have any time to take cover (and nowhere to hide anyway, because Hamas has neglected to build bomb shelters in Gaza).

We'll see how the proportionate crowd takes to a little of its own medicine.

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- 1 tsp tumeric
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tbsp chopped mint (15 ml)
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- Salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
- 1 small onion, finely diced
- 1 1/2 c **Israeli** couscous
- 1 cinnamon stick
- Handful of currants, optional

Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Saute onions & red pepper until soft but not browned, about 4 minutes. Add turmeric, cinnamon stick, bay leaf and currants. Cook, stirring, until couscous starts to toast, about 2 minutes. Add stock, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat to low. Cook couscous for 10-12 minutes, or until all liquid is absorbed. Remove from heat. Let stand covered, for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork before serving. Garnish with chopped mint

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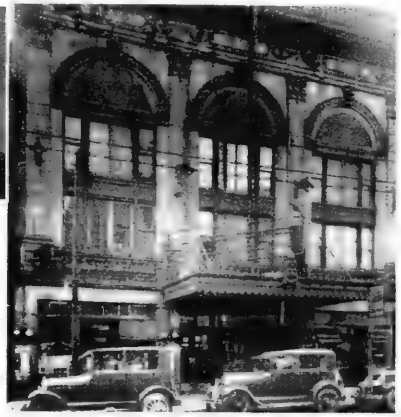
By BILL GLADSTONE



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A former newsboy from Minneapolis, Nathan L. Nathanson purchased the old Majestic Theatre on Adelaide Street from Ambrose Small and opened it as the Regent, Toronto's first deluxe movie house, in 1916. That was the first in the Famous Players chain of theatres that he and his associates built up across Canada. One of a group of prominent Jewish film-industry pioneers in Toronto, Nathanson was a vice-chairman of the board of the CBC and helped Holy Blossom Temple construct its building in the late 1930s. When he died in 1943, condolences came from the likes of Jack Warner, Charles Boyer, and Abbott and Costello.

Demonstrating behind closed doors

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

Recently, a community rally in support of Israel was held indoors, at Beth Tzedec Congregation. Similarly, rallies, also in and around Jewish institutions, took place in Halifax, Montreal, Vancouver and Winnipeg.

Yet when one looks around the world at pro-Israel rallies since the incursion into Gaza, the vast majority of them outside Canada were held outdoors, and open to the public.

More than 10,000 Jews and non-Jews gathered on 42nd Street in New York outside the Israeli consulate recently to show their support for the Gaza offensive. Thousands more pro-Israel demonstrators rallied across cities in Europe, including Prague, Dublin, Antwerp and Berlin. Twenty thousand people participated in the London demonstration, which took place in Trafalgar Square.

Despite the fact that venomous anti-Israel groups stood metres away from Jews, yelling vicious epithets, Diaspora communities outside of Canada stood, firmly and heroically, displaying their support for Israel.

I asked Bernie Farber, the CEO of the Canadian Jewish Congress, which was involved in organizing the Toronto rally, why it is that we hide away in fear when demonstrating in favour of our homeland Israel.

Bernie said, "I don't think we should take the fact that we chose to demonstrate civilly and not demonize our neighbours as fear. Instead, we demonstrated according to Canadian values – sensitively, with understanding and compassion."

He added, "I don't think that taking to the street gives expression to bravery and courage. One can demonstrate in all kind of ways and besides, nobody had negated an outdoor rally."

While Bernie is right that Canadians in general, and more specifically the Jewish community, are and have always been sensitive and decent folk, we were also once a more mighty community, willing to pile into the streets fighting for the release of Soviet Jewry.

I believe that over the years we have indeed become fearful, and if you ask our leaders why we are holding our demonstrations – or perhaps better called "events" – indoors, they will tell you they are afraid of somebody getting hurt, God forbid.

While I certainly appreciate and understand this fear, I would say that there are ways and means of controlling a rally so that injuries do not occur or are minimized through the fine work of our very capable police force and Jewish community security.

Further, and more importantly, the way in which we hide away from our adversaries is clear and evident to the anti-Israel camp. When 1,500 Hamas supporters hold a rally in downtown Toronto and 50 Jews, mostly Israelis, are waving flags across the street, our enemies are encouraged in their fight.

This war should end in its right time. Until it does, however, the Jewish community of Toronto and Canada needs to encourage our Israeli brothers and sisters to be brave in Ashkelon, Sderot and the corridors of Gaza City, as well as expressing that same Jewish bravery in the outdoors of Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Montreal and Halifax.

We need to do this for our own self-esteem, to allow thousands of non-Jews to demonstrate with us, and and to prove to Israel that Diaspora Jewry has the ability to stand eye-to-eye with our enemies right here in Toronto. If we do not let the Jewish community publicly sing *Am Yisrael Chai* at the top of our lungs, one voice braided with the next, then in fact we are appearing to be ashamed.

Kol hakavod to our community leaders for coordinating a pro-Israel rally. Next time, however, let us strengthen our determination by showing the world openly that Canadian Jews are honourable and fearless because of our love of Israel, God and what is just.

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War for Israel's image is a CLIC away

Online initiative aims to fight negative portrayals in media

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

The keyboard is mightier than the sword and may just help Israel win the PR war.

So insists Amir Gissin, Israel's consul general for Toronto and Western Canada.

In an open letter to the community sent Jan. 15, Gissin urged Canadians sympathetic to Israel's plight to get on the "new media" battlefield in support of the Jewish state.

At the crest of the Gaza-Israel conflict, Gissin's letter, titled "This time it's personal," called on community members who are "frustrated or concerned with the portrayal of Israel in Canadian news and with biased depictions" to make their voices heard by engaging in letter-writing campaigns to news outlets across the country by endorsing a new online initiative – the Canadian Light on Israel Coverage (CLIC).

"You're not alone," Gissin wrote. "Ten thousand voices like yours can respond every day: praise, protest, inform and correct on leading Canadian news websites, in real time, effectively."

CLIC was created as a digital grassroots tool by a group of five local, volunteer, pro-Israel, self-described "media watchers" led by Paul Ross, an Irish-Israeli Jew residing in Toronto who approached Gissin with the idea during the height of the recent Israel-Gaza conflict.

People interested in sharing pro-Israel sentiment with the Canadian media should register with CLIC by sending in their e-mail address to todaysCLIC@gmail.com, Ross told The CJN in an interview last week.

Gissin said that by engaging in this virtual war of words, everyday Canadian citizens who support Israel's struggle for peace and security can "make a huge difference by illuminating Israel's position in Canadian media" and ensure fair and balanced coverage of the situation in both Gaza and Israel.

Amir Gissin

The consul general's letter also asked that like-minded community members pass on his message and CLIC's e-mail address, in order to achieve maximum dissemination.

Ross said CLIC is not affiliated with any Jewish community organization, nor is it in the employ of the Israeli consulate.

He said that while the war in Gaza may be over, the gruesome images coming out of the territory are effectively lowering public opinion of Israel.

The scenes are "horrible" he said, adding that "those [Gazans] who've died and been affected because of [Hamas]… I'm the last person who enjoys a war. I'm not a warmonger, but Israel did what it had to. And now – when public opinion has dropped even lower – is the time [CLIC] can really make a difference. Israel is still a hot issue."

On Jan. 20, those registered with CLIC started receiving a once-daily media alert consisting of "a salient Canadian story or news item related to Israel, coupled with a call to action requiring just a minute or two of your time," Gissin wrote.

CLIC's inaugural e-mail-out linked readers to a Jan. 19 op-ed in the Toronto Sun written by Canadian Union of Public Employees Ontario president, Sid Ryan, in which he defended himself against what he called "a new form of McCarthyism" being waged against him by defenders of Israel.

Continued on page 27

Jewish adoptee finds biological brother

Bernie Shiner

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

When Bernie Shiner filed a form in 2007 with Health Canada in hopes of obtaining his medical history, he never imagined he'd learn he had a brother.

"Whatever hair I may have on my body stood up," said Shiner, a 58-year-old insurance broker with First Service Brokers.

Until last summer, Shiner was sure he was an only child.

Having been adopted by a Jewish couple in Toronto when he was four years old, Shiner was told his biological mother had died in a car accident and his father was unable to care for him.

Without any cause to question the story, Shiner was happy to grow up in the Forest Hill area of Toronto and embraced his Jewish upbringing.

He never could have known that just a few kilometres away in the Bathurst Manor area of Toronto, his little brother, David Goodman, 53, had also been given up by the same woman, adopted by a Jewish couple, and raised as an only child.

As Shiner grew older and developed health issues that come with age, he decided to apply to Health Canada for his medical history.

"I filled out the application form online and you send it off, and they tell you that it takes a good six months to get a response," Shiner said.

"So closer to eights months later, I received a letter. Basically, the letter stipulated that there was no medical history they were aware of, but that I have a brother. I was sort of standing there looking at it and saying, 'Let me read this again,'" he said with a laugh.

Continued on page 6

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Egypt urges Hamas to accept truce – please see page 2

The News in Brief

Canada

Hate Denounced

OTTAWA — A prominent Muslim group came out against "anti-Semitic language" heard at rallies to protest Israel's actions in Gaza. In a statement earlier this month, the Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations said that while it respects the right to free speech, it "categorically condemned the anti-Semitic language used by protesters at recent rallies against Israel's ongoing assault against Gaza."

Educating Christians

TORONTO — The Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC) last week teamed with International Christian Embassy Jerusalem–Canada, an evangelical group, to hold a workshop for young Christian adults on "contemporary Holocaust issues" and "the history of Israel." The seminar took place Jan. 21 in Toronto.

World

Iran Slams Canada

TEHRAN — The Iranian foreign ministry summoned Canada's chargé d'affaires in Tehran "to voice Iran's strongly worded protest over the country's support for the Zionists' crimes and atrocities in Gaza," Iran's official news agency reported. The Islamic Republic News agency said James Carrick was formally rebuked Jan. 20 in response to Canada's recent vote against a UN Human Rights Council resolution condemning Israel's actions in Gaza. The foreign ministry accused Canada of "double standards and selective approach in dealing with human rights."

Starbucks Attacked

LONDON — Calls to boycott Starbucks, based on false claims that the company helped finance Israel's military operation in Gaza, led to violent attacks on two of its cafés in London. The boycott calls have been circulating by e-mail and text message with the claim that Starbucks and McDonald's were donating two weeks' revenues to Israel. On Jan. 17, during an anti-Israel rally in London's Trafalgar Square, rapper Lowkey attacked firms, including Starbucks, that he said have Zionist links. After the rally, two groups of a few dozen people each smashed the windows of two Starbucks cafés and looted the shops.

Bomb Left At Shul

FLORENCE — A rudimentary explosive device was found at the entrance of the Chabad House in Florence. The device, constructed from a small camping gas canister, was discovered during the day Jan. 17, but not reported to police until Saturday night after Shabbat. The Chabad House is located half a block from the city's main synagogue. Reports said a paper fuse had been lit, but it burned out and no damage occurred. Tensions are high in Italy over Israel's Gaza operation, with thousands attending an anti-Israel rally in Rome on Jan. 17.

Rabbi Criticized for Role in Prayer Service

NEW YORK — The main modern Orthodox rabbinical association says a prominent member violated its rules by participating in the National Prayer Service.

A Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) official told JTA that Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, spiritual leader of Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in New York City, broke the group's longstanding rules by participating in the service Jan 23 at the National Cathedral on the morning after U.S. President Barack Obama's inauguration.

The RCA said that "participation in a prayer service held in the sanctuary of a church is prohibited. Any member of the RCA who attends such a service does so in contravention of this policy and should not be perceived as representing the organization in any capacity."

The group isn't seeking to sanction the rabbi, a source familiar with the case said, but, the source added, any RCA member can suggest that another member be brought before a disciplinary board for violating rules.

Rabbi Lookstein joined six representatives of various religious groups, including from Reform and Conservative Judaism, in reciting portions of a non-denominational prayer. Most of the service was non-sectarian, but there were a few Christian references.

Rabbi Lookstein said that "the people who spoke to me about it indicated it was an important contribution to the Orthodox community, because it is only right for the Orthodox community to be supporting the president in a visible way when he is being supported by representatives of the Conservative and Reform movements."

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The (high) cost of living Jewishly

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Special Report

Anybody who shops for groceries is well aware that there's a premium attached to kosher food.

At one midtown grocery store, kosher lean ground beef was nearly twice the cost of the non-kosher variety, while kosher chicken nuggets were more than double the price of an equivalent non-kosher brand, and strawberry yogurt in the kosher section was almost 100 per cent more costly than the non-kosher brand only a few aisles away.

Over the course of a year for a family of four, that can add up, but it's likely not even the biggest premium that a Jewish lifestyle will exact.

Add on tuition fees at Jewish day schools, which start in the $10,000 to $11,000 range in kindergarten and soar to more than $18,000 for high school, then factor in Jewish summer camps, synagogue memberships, trips to Israel, club/organization memberships and donations to Jewish charities, and it starts to look like being fully involved in Jewish life is something limited to families earning at least six figures.

One researcher in the United States has put a dollar figure on the cost of living Jewishly. Gerald Bubis, vice president and fellow at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and adjunct professor of social work at the University of Southern California, determined in 2002 that for a family with two children in day school, the economic cost for Jewish services would range between $25,000 to $35,000 (US) per year.

Given that the median income for American Jewish households at the time was $50,000, "it is clear that this figure is untenable," he wrote. "Indeed, it is unlikely that households whose gross incomes are under $125,000 could manage to spend 25 per cent to 30 per cent of their gross income on Jewish services. After all, most families pay a mortgage, save for college, drive cars, give to other charities and even choose to go to concerts, take vacations, subscribe to magazines and the like."

Bubis reported his findings in a report titled The Costs of Jewish Living: Revisiting Jewish Involvement and Barriers, published under the auspices of the William Petschek National Jewish Family Center of the American Jewish Committee. The $30,000 average cost included $1,100 for synagogue dues, $22,000 for two children in day school, $1,200 for day camp for two kids, $5,000 for sleepaway camp for two children, JCC dues and a federation gift of $200. Sending children to supplementary Jewish schools could substantially cut into that cost, bringing it down to the $5,000 to $8,000 range, he stated.

In a telephone interview from Los Angeles, Bubis said Canadian and American Jewish households share the same concerns about assimilation and continuity – and the cost of services that address them – although the process of assimilation is more advanced in the United States, largely because Canadian Jews are one or two generations closer to their European roots.

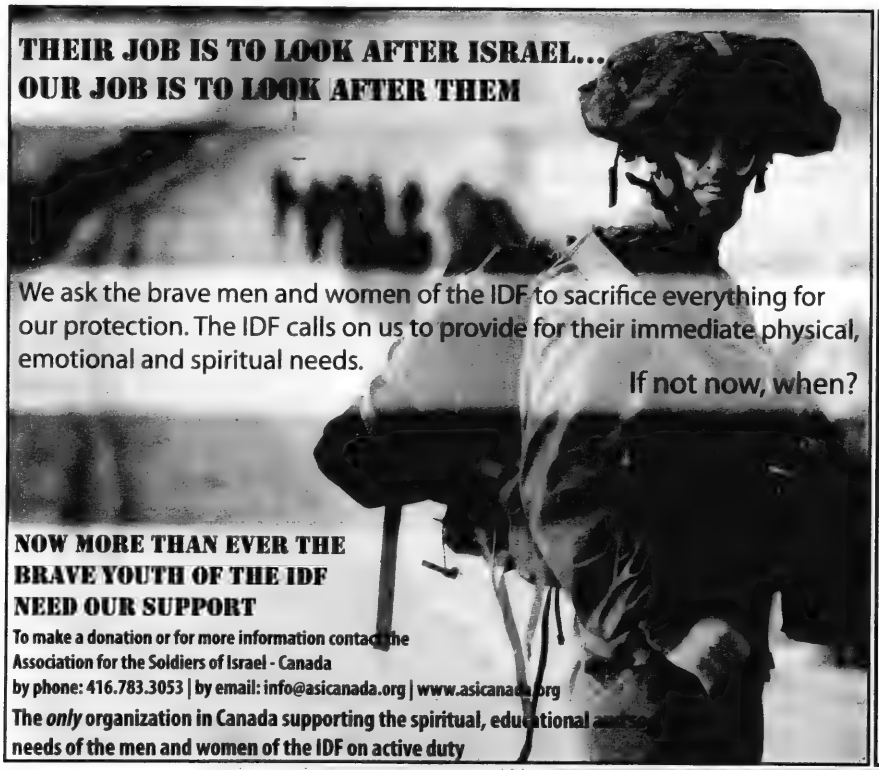
A native of Winnipeg who has lived most of his life in the United States, Bubis said for a Jewish family to enjoy various institutional offerings – everything from a day school education to summer camp – would now require incomes of $130,000 to $150,000 (US).

The median income for American Jewish households is currently (prior to the economic meltdown) $80,000 (US).

In Toronto, UJA Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto has recognized that parents who enrol their children in Jewish day schools are making a financial sacrifice.

"That's why we provide tuition subsidies of nearly $8 million annually to parents who can't afford full fees," said spokesperson Howard English. "No other North American Federation subsidizes tuitions to this extent. In addition, UJA Federation is matching a $1 million grant from Henry and

Continued on page 7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A historic inauguration

From the editor's desk...

Whatever inscription the presidency of Barack Obama leaves one day, either in those proverbial "dusty" pages of history or in Google's virtual pages, most people of our generation will be able to recall where we were for his inauguration on Jan. 20, 2009.

Most of us, of course, watched the administration of the presidential oath and Obama's inaugural address on television from a comfortable place at home or at work. Many people across Canada gathered at special assembly points, to view the proceedings among a large group.

But literally millions of people, as we saw, among them many Canadians, made a pilgrimage-like trip to Washington, to be there, "witnesses" to a historic moment, "witnesses" many of them also hoped, to a turning point in American history, if not world history as well.

I do not wish to overstate the case, but a palpable Obama phenomenon had clearly taken hold in America even from before the Nov. 4 election results. Except among the sourest and dourest of Republicans and hard-core white supremacist curmudgeons, the people of the United States had boarded their own sort of "freedom train" to a new land of optimism and hope.

The phenomenon culminated in the emotional celebratory scene in Washington of vast humanity standing and dancing in very cold temperatures along the Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue.

To be sure, the euphoria has already died down a great deal. America has settled into the new norm of being governed by a new, younger chief executive. But being the chief executive means making chief executive decisions. And each decision brings its disappointments.

But last Tuesday was a day bristling with significance that was universally understood and universally acknowledged. Understanding the historic uniqueness of the occasion, Israel's President Shimon Peres, just hours before the inauguration, from half a world away, issued a special congratulatory statement to mark the moment.

The following are excerpts from Peres' statement.

"Today is a great day not only for the United States of America, but for the entire world…

"I pray here in Jerusalem that Barack Obama will be a great president of the United States. If he will be a great president of the United States, he will serve all humankind, all nations and all persons because to be a great American president today means to struggle for peace, to fight terror, to correct the environment and to offer the young generation a better future.

"It is a great day for the United States because… only 10 years ago, [his election] would have been unimaginable. From now on, all of us have the right to be different and equal… We don't have to apologize [for our differences] and we don't have to divide humanity between inferior and superior.

"I want, on behalf of the people of Israel… to tell the president, 'God bless you.'

"Your success will be our success. Your hope will become a reality. We should continue to dream to make the world move ahead further, better and peacefully."

Peres' effusively excited good wishes were typical of most of the messages that flowed to Washington last week.

President Obama's inaugural address, however, did not soar as high as some of candidate Obama's speeches. But that was no doubt intentional. For President Obama has a wider domestic constituency to appease than did candidate Obama. And his speeches must now hug a terrain that is closer to the meeting point of both constituencies.

But still, the speech did reach a number of high points, and the newly-sworn-in President Obama made certain to emphasize a number of key assertions and beliefs.

He rejected the notion that western society – materialistic, acquisitive, democratic, entrepreneurial, free and only partially God-fearing – is the root cause for terrorism directed against it.

"We will not apologize for our way of life, nor will we waver in its defence, and for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken; you cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you."

He also spoke firmly but invitingly to the various Third World nations who are interested in establishing new, better relations with the United States and with the West.

"To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward based on mutual interest and mutual respect. To those leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict or blame their society's ills on the West: know that our people will judge you on what you build, not on what you destroy. To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent: know that you are on the wrong side of history, but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist."

In all, the inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th president of the United States was a moment to savour, a springboard for the high vaulting of emotions and hopes, dreams and possibilities.

–MBD

SeeJN

SUPPORTING THE TROOPS: Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni are seen at last Sunday's cabinet meeting, where Olmert said Israel will give full support to everyone who operated on its behalf, adding that "the commanders and soldiers who were sent to Gaza need to know that they are safe from various tribunals." [Alex Kolomoiski/Pool/Flash 90 photo]

Greater Toronto Area

Israelis pitch innovations to Canadian investors

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

For two days next week, Canadian investors and government representatives will rub elbows with academics, scientists and businesspeople from Israel in an event that organizers hope will one day spin off into profitable commercial enterprises.

The "Lab-to-Market" symposium is touted as matching "Israeli innovation to Canadian know-how" and will bring together representatives "from Israel's most prominent university in the area of research and development [Tel Aviv University]... to showcase and expose leading technologies and opportunities to the Canadian market."

It will run on Feb. 3 and Feb. 4, first at the Intercontinental Hotel, and on the second day at the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX).

Sheldon Potter, incoming president of Canadian Friends of Tel Aviv University (TAU), believes the event will be a "win-win" for participants from both sides, with Canadian capital and know-how helping commercialize Israeli technical and medical innovations.

"Canada is behind [Israel] in commercializing innovation," he said. "Canada could certainly use our innovation out of Israel."

A lawyer with Fogler, Rubinoff LLP, Potter said "our firm is working with Israeli companies. We see the opportunity for sure," although Canadian commercial involvement with the university is still in its early stages.

TAU is a source of numerous technological innovations, but it's not particularly well known in Toronto, he said. "It is a very large research university, with involvement in everything from solar energy, to nanotechnology to life science." Researchers at TAU are also heavily into military applications.

Among the TAU speakers to address the symposium will be Ilana Gozes, who will discuss research in developing a medication to reverse memory loss for Alzheimer's patients; Udi Gazit, who will describe research into nanotechnology; Amihay Freeman, who will present developments in employing natural enzymes to heal wounds, and Avi Seifert, who will present information on a device to reduce fuel emissions on trucks.

Janis Koyanagi, director of business development strategy for the TSX and the TSX Venture Exchange, said "our interest is to promote business connections between Canada and Israel. We see a great benefit. We see technological development in Israel and we can see it financed by Canadian investors.

"We believe our capital markets are well positioned to take it to the commercial stage."

The TSX operates two programs that provide investment capital to up-and-coming corporations. Either could be of use to investors seeking to turn Israeli technological breakthroughs into commercial applications, she said.

With its reputation for technical achievements, Israel is on the TSX's radar as part of the exchange's efforts to attract foreign corporations. One of her colleagues, Raymond King, visits the Jewish state twice a year, Koyanagi said.

The TSX is also influenced by the private sector's interest in Israel. "When we see the investment banking community and the legal community in Canada selling Israel, then there's a chance for growth in Israel," she added.

Potter said despite the recent conflict in Gaza, business in Israel is proceeding as usual and "out of the dozens of calls to get people to the event, only one person raised the security question."

The symposium is co-sponsored by, among others, Canadian Friends of TAU, Fogler, Rubinoff LLP, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Toronto Atmospheric Fund, the TSX and the TSX Venture Exchange.

TORAH DEDICATED: A Torah scroll painted by Israeli artist Michal Moren was recently dedicated at Chabad-Lubavitch of Markham. The Torah was donated by Colin and Joy Shapiro, in memory of Colin Shapiro's parents. The congregation's Rabbi Avraham Plotkin thanked the Shapiro family and explained that the illustrated Torah will enhance the synagogue, as families will be able to see the Torah portion in a visual, hands-on way. Seen at the dedication, attended by more than 150 guests, are, from left, Zoe, Colin, Joy and Mahlah Shapiro.

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Brothers share a number of personality traits

Continued from page 1

Goodman, formerly a pharmaceutical representative and now a golf instructor and owner of Swing Easy School of Golf, had registered with the program in 1990 in hopes of finding his biological family.

"But then I wasn't registered, so he was never going to find me. If I hadn't registered and he hadn't registered, we never would have found each other," Shiner said.

In the letter, Goodman's name, address and phone number was provided.

"When I saw the letter and I'm standing there, I was numb and I immediately wanted to call somebody."

He said he couldn't get a hold of his wife, so he called his oldest son, Joey.

"I said, 'Joey, you're not going to believe this, but you have an uncle.' So, he said, 'Yeah, Uncle Isaac." [Shiner's wife's brother-in-law]. And I said, 'No, no, no. A blood uncle.'"

Shiner said he didn't think twice about calling the number provided in the letter, but the contact information was outdated.

After calling 411 and searching the Internet to no avail, Shiner picked up a phone book.

"There was one David Goodman and everything below it was a D. Goodman. So I called the David Goodman and it was him. First shot. First call. It was bashert. Meant to be."

He said he could tell that his brother was apprehensive about the call.

"I mean, 18 years later, some idiot calls and says, 'Hi, I'm your brother.' But I made it very calming for him and I said, 'Look, you do whatever checks you need to do.'"

Three weeks later, Shiner and Goodman scheduled a meeting.

"He comes walking up and I look at him and he looks at me and he says, 'You have blue eyes.' I said, 'You've got brown.' He said, 'You've got hair. I said, 'You don't,'" Shiner recalled, laughing.

"We both started to laugh because we have absolutely nothing in common other than our height and that was it. We spent four hours at a Tim Horton's that night."

David Goodman

He said that despite the physical differences, there does seem to be a few similarities in their personalities.

"How shall I say this? We can both work a room. He is very social. He likes to feel he's humorous," Shiner said with a laugh.

But they still have so much to learn about each other, he said.

"It's like going out with a new girlfriend. You slowly get to learn about each other and we talk at least twice a week... We are definitely developing a friendship."

Although Shiner understands that adoptees don't always experience the same happy ending he has, he hopes his story will encourage people not to fear reaching their biological family.

"If you're ever confronted with this situation, don't hesitate to call because if you don't call you may be missing out on something that you could enjoy for whatever length of time it will be," he said.

"If it doesn't work out, nothing lost, nothing gained. You didn't have the person before, you don't have them now."

He said that since their first meeting less than a year ago, Goodman, his two children and his father have come over numerous times for Shabbat dinners, and Shiner, his wife and three kids have been invited to his place where he's been introduced to his friends.

"Just about every friend that he has introduced me to, I've had a connection with somehow, except him. The two of us cannot find any connection whatsoever," he said.

"It's just so funny that we have not yet found a connection. But we have blood."

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SWEET REWARDS: Rebecca Engelberg, a Grade 12 student at Torah High, recently won the last of 10 brand-new IBM Thinkpad laptops raffled off to students as part of the Torah High Laptop Giveaway. Here, Engelberg receives her laptop from Rabbi Yisroel (Rebo) Rabinowitz, principal. Torah High offers Jewish studies courses, for credit, to public high school students.

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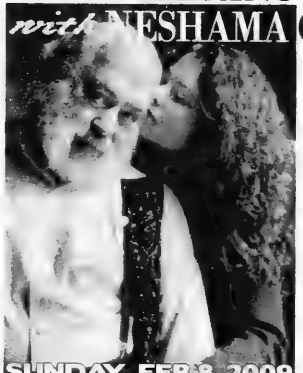
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The Staff and Board of Directors of Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC)

would like to express our sincere sadness at the passing of the

Honourable Sydney Harris ז"ל

Sydney was national President of CJC from 1974-1977 and Chair of the Ontario Region from 1968-1971. He remained a respected member of our community relations committee until his recent death.

We extend our deepest condolences to his wife, Enid, sons Mark and David, grandchildren Lindsay and Brett, and his sister, Thelma Rose.

Sydney Harris was an outstanding leader of the Jewish community. His devotion and support will always be remembered.

Bernie M Farber, *CEO* — **Sylvain Abitbol**, *Co-President* — **Rabbi Reuven Bulka**, *Co-President*

Federation allocates $14M per year to education

Continued from page 3

Julia Koschitzky to Toronto day schools, providing an additional $2 million to the day school system. The amount that a school receives is based on the number of subsidized students enrolled at the school."

Altogether, federation commits $14 million per year to education, "the largest allocation of any North American Jewish federation," English said. That "signifies a deep commitment to assisting day school parents, an incentive for parents to choose a Jewish education for their children and an investment in a thriving future for our Jewish community. The funds that we have set aside for Jewish education represent roughly 35 per cent of our domestic allocations. It's the largest single domestic allocation in our budget.

"The connection between Jewish education, Jewish identification and involvement in Jewish life is indisputable. Jewish education anchors a healthy Jewish community," he said.

In his U.S. research, Bubis found that only about 25 per cent of higher income families send their children to day schools, and fewer than 10 per cent in all income brackets attend day schools. Fewer than 10 per cent of children attend Jewish-sponsored camps.

While the full panoply of services is out of the price range of the median-income family, "of those who can afford it, most choose not to use those services," he said. "If they choose private school, they choose a non-Jewish private school."

Bubis agreed that affordability is a problem for many families, but subsidies aimed at correcting that create their own problems. If the number of children increased thanks to community allocations, that would mean a greater need for buildings, staff and other infrastructure investments, making the cost balloon even more, he said.

"It's a very complicated issue," he added.

Bubis suggested another way of looking at continuity and Jewish identity besides cost. As he sees it, it comes down to determining whether the community wants to promote Jewish knowledge – the ability to parse text, analyze commentaries and speak Hebrew – or promote Jewish identity – the identification with the Jewish people, history, culture and Israel.

Many of the "external appurtenances" of Jewish life are not particularly expensive, he said.

Jewish artwork, mezuzahs on doors, Jewish books, magazines and newspapers are within reach of most families. Parents concerned about instilling a Jewish identity, if not Jewish knowledge, can do so outside the day school system, he suggested. There are youth groups, camp experiences, trips to Israel, supper table talk, marking events in the Jewish calendar, that are much less costly.

Subsidies can create their own problem

But, based on his study of American Jews, "with all the availability of these less expensive things, most Jews don't take advantage of it," Bubis said.

Even for the most expensive item, the relatively low participation numbers in day schools point to a lack of interest more than affordability. "Of those who can afford it, most choose not to use those services. If they choose private school, they'll choose a non-Jewish private school," he said. "People make choices not connected with money."

Rabbi Charles Grysman, spiritual leader of Zichron Yisroel Congregation of Associated Hebrew Schools, agrees with Bubis, up to a point. Rabbi Grysman, who is also a native Winnipegger said, "I have encountered people who have chosen not to give their children a Jewish education because it related to issues of lifestyle. Sometimes it's not affordable... For some, it's lower on the priority list," he said.

"The financial stress in Toronto is 10 times greater than anywhere else," he added, pointing to the absence of government funding for religious schools.

Rabbi Grysman noted that some who might qualify for a community subsidy cringe at the thought of having their entire financial situation picked over with a fine-toothed comb. Some see it as a kind of "humiliation."

But even on the less-costly aspects of Jewish life, such as eating kosher food, he said he has found that "peripherally identified Jews will forego kashrut because of costs."

In the end, it's "an issue of priorities," he said.

While the U.S. and Canadian situations are different, Bubis said Canada will soon emulate the American experience.

Focusing on making a Jewish lifestyle "a desirable choice for those who can afford it" is key for the community, along with helping those who can't afford it, he added.

"Everybody today is a Jew by choice," Rabbi Grysman said. If the key issue is one of continuity and identification, these can be addressed in new ways that appeal to today's young people. Jewish television shows [his son is involved with the Jewish Television Network, a non-profit, Los Angeles-based multimedia provider], music and literature are ways of building that identity, while employing new technology such as e-mail, Facebook and other Internet applications are ways of delivering it, he said.

A lecture series at the local JCC can attract perhaps 400 people. On the Web, thousands could tune in. In the United States, more than 20 million people watched a PBS show that featured prominent American Jews talking about being Jewish and dealing with the temptations of assimilation. The Jewish Television Network's programs are carried by more than 90 PBS affiliates nationwide and reach 80 million American homes.

"Until the Jewish community tries new technology, using old tools for the new world won't work," Rabbi Grysman said. "Unless the new ways are used, it won't resonate with young people."

SMALL WORLD: Kylie Shulman, left, and Samantha Rosenzweig, Grade 5 students at Associated Hebrew Schools' southern branch, display the African Sand Art they created during African and Caribbean Canadians Week, the second in a month-long, school-wide celebration of Canada's multicultural diversity. The week concluded with a performance by the African dance group Black Ice and the tasting of mango smoothies. Other cultures celebrated include Chinese Canadians, native Canadians and French Canadians.

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Abbas at a crossroads

A week and a few days after the shooting in and from Gaza stopped, a large murky cloud still hovers over the area. Egypt is spearheading the effort to mediate details of a quasi-formal truce between Israel and Hamas. But as of this writing, there is little progress to report. Hamas is preoccupied with other, more compelling priorities.

First, it continued with its viciously violent campaign against Fatah sympathizers, beating, torturing and executing scores of individuals whom they accused of having collaborated with the Israelis. It was a convenient pretext for simply removing their potential opposition.

Second, it mobilized the full force of its considerable propaganda apparatus to wage a two-front war against the Jewish state in the image-rich battleground of public relations: Hamas led a tour of mostly western journalists to some tunnels still operating under the Egyptian border. The photo-op enabled the terrorist leaders to boast that they had not been defeated by the Israelis. It also allowed them to publicly embarrass, if not deride, Egypt, the European Union and the United States, which have all pledged to help bring about an end to arms smuggling there.

Hamas also let loose its barrage of war crimes allegations against Israel. In this effort, ironically and sadly, the terrorist organization is aided by a large cadre of international accusers who enthusiastically and obsessively join in hurling this particularly odious invective at the Jewish state.

Hamas apparently also refused to allow Mahmoud Abbas' Palestinian Authority to man the checkpoint at the Rafah border crossing, one of the key conditions sought both by the Egyptians and the United States. Moreover, and far more telling, Osama Hamdan, Hamas' representative in Lebanon said on Sunday that the Fatah movement must end its talks with Israel if it wishes to reconcile with Hamas.

According to Ha'aretz, Hamdan, a close ally of Hamas political leader Khaled Meshal, said that the group welcomed dialogue with the Abbas-led Fatah, but any reconciliation should be based on a resistance program to "liberate territory and regain rights." He also demanded that the PA end security co-ordination with Israel, since, he maintained, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process has ended.

Hamdan reportedly said that Fatah must issue "a clear and frank declaration to stop security co-ordination with the [Israeli] occupation, release [Hamas] prisoners and later end negotiations [with Israel], because the peace process is irreversibly over. It's time for us to talk about a reconciliation based on a resistance program to liberate the [occupied] territory and regain rights," he added.

The blunt speaking by Hamas leaders is a deeply piercing provocation to the western countries that are scrambling to bring some sense of order, some sense of peace to the Hamas-driven chaos of Gaza. But Hamdan's thrust cuts deepest into Abbas. The Fatah leader is clearly at a crossroads. He must choose – finally, definitively and unambiguously – between permanent Palestinian statelessness alongside Hamas' hateful national program, or the possibility of Palestinian statehood and a prosperous future without them.

25 years ago in The CJN

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl left Israel after a five-day visit, saying his country would sell Saudi Arabia $5 billion (US) of advanced military equipment, despite Israeli objections.

Dry Bones
COMMUNITY AUZ TIME
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CHABAD HASSID AND A LIBERAL AMERICAN JEW?
TIME'S UP! ...AND THE ANSWER IS...
BUZZZ
THEY BOTH BELIEVE IN THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH
BUT ONLY ONE THINKS HE'S CURRENTLY IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

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Outdoor pro-Israel rally attracts 1,000

As organizers of a successful pro-Israel student rally on Jan. 18 at Dundas Square in downtown Toronto, we were surprised to read Avrum Rosensweig's column ("Demonstrating behind closed doors) in the Jan. 22 edition of The CJN, in which he called for an outdoor gathering on Israel's behalf.

The Toronto rally for Israel, which attracted 1,000 people on a cold, snowy afternoon, was organized by a coalition of student groups – the Canadian Centre for Israel Activism, Hasbara Fellowships and Hillel of Greater Toronto. It was endorsed by major community organizations, including UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, B'nai Brith Canada and Aish HaTorah, for the specific purpose of getting Israel's message out on the street.

Many of the same students who came to Dundas Square joined 5,000 people at the Beth Tzedec Congregation rally on Jan. 8, where they were certainly not left with the impression of fear motivating the choice of location. The Beth Tzedec rally was an admirable reflection of our Jewish community's remarkable solidarity, and that of many non-Jews, with the people of Israel.

Shirin Ezekiel
Orna Hollander
Sammy Katz
Toronto

* * *

Dry Bones
THE NAME NEWSMAN
WHAT'S ANOTHER WORD FOR AN ILLEGAL WEST BANK SETTLEMENT?
THAT DEPENDS.
IF ARABS LIVE IN IT, CALL IT A TOWN OR A VILLAGE
RIGHT.
AND IF JEWS LIVE IN IT?
IT'S CALLED AN OBSTACLE TO PEACE.
GOTCHA!

Orthodox cherish fellow Jews

Leaving aside Reform Rabbi Dow Marmur's clearly visceral distaste for haredim – those Jews who "wear black hats and sheitels" and whose religious standards he considers "warped" – he propagates a myth, though, about Orthodox Jews that is every bit as imagined and incendiary as the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion is about all Jews ("Say no to the haredim!" CJN, Dec. 18).

Haredim, he implies, do not regard non-Orthodox Jews as Jews. That, of course, is nonsense. And his sly addition of the word "necessarily" before "not" [in the sentence, "Non-Orthodox Jews may be good for giving money, but not necessarily for being regarded as Jews."] is a fig leaf that does little to cover his naked bigotry.

What haredim – and all Jews who respect Halachah and its decisors – do not, and indeed cannot, accept are conversions that do not meet the most essential requirements mandated by Jewish law.

For that sin (in Rabbi Marmur's eyes), we haredim are "ruthlessly rigid," and see other Jews as good only "for giving money."

If the rabbi can tame his wrath, he might gain some perspective by imagining a scenario in which a country's medical experts seeks to ensure that the government provides appropriate treatment to citizens, but are assailed by various proponents of "alternative medicine" like "visualization" for cancer and garlic and lemon for AIDS. Shall the doctors, in the interest of "liberalism," embrace the "non-traditional standards" of the "progressive" newcomers?

Halachah may not be meaningful to the Reform movement, but it remains deeply so to countless Orthodox Jews, and with most "traditional" Jews in Israel who respect the Jewish religious tradition, even if they are not personally fully observant

No, Rabbi Marmur, we Orthodox cherish all our fellow Jews. But we cherish, too, the Divine mandate to which all of us are heir. Please don't deride us for that.

Rabbi Avi Shafran
Director of Public Affairs
Agudath Israel of America

* * *

Condemns large section of community

I was quite surprised to read Rabbi Dow Marmur of the Reform movement denounce haredi Jews in The CJN ("Say no to the haredim!" Dec. 18).

Rabbi Marmur is condemning a large segment of the Jewish community with his vindictive words. Instead of trying to build bridges, he adds fuel to the fire. He writes that "non-Orthodox Jews may be good for giving money, but not necessarily for being regarded as Jews." In this, he is being disingenuous, as it is non-Orthodox converts who are not converted according to Halachah who are not accepted by Orthodox Judaism.

Rabbi Marmur writes: "I've no problem with haredim who set standards for themselves and each other, however warped I may consider them to be." This unfortunate use of words shows his animosity and condescending attitude.

Our sages say that the Second Temple was destroyed because of *sinat chinam*, baseless hatred among Jews. May we practice only *ahavat chinam*, loving our fellow Jew without preconditions, so that we merit to see the Third Temple in all its glory with the coming of the Mashiach and the Final Redemption!

Rabbi Mordechai Bulua
Montreal

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Needed: deep historical thinking

By YEHEZKEL DROR
Special to The CJN

One of Israel's greatest weaknesses in the past few years has been its inability to engage in multi-dimensional thinking of the kind anchored in an understanding that immediate events are the result of historical processes. At the same time, it has a tendency to focus on clearly visible phenomena without delving deeper.

The 2005 withdrawal from Gaza is an example of this. Had the disengagement been accompanied by the creation of public-works projects that would have provided a basic income to any resident of Gaza willing to work, an income clearly conditional upon the absence of hostile actions against Israel – the outcome would have been different. At the same, had first-rate resettlement assistance been extended to the Israeli families forced to leave Gaza, it would have made any future evacuation of territory easier to carry out.

Thinking-in-history, as required, leads to five insights:

1. The establishment of the State of Israel is a historic metamorphosis that constituted a shock to Islam. Arab-Muslim adjustment to this development is a long process and will continue for at least another generation or two.
2. Tensions within Islam, rooted in the difficulty of reconciling tradition with modernity, are creating regional instability, which can be expected to last at least until the end of the century, and will be accompanied by internal conflicts and aggression against the "representatives of modernity."
3. Simultaneously, there is a rise in the power of Islamic actors, due to energy resources in their hands, growing Islamic communities in the West, the proliferation of arms (including weapons of mass destruction), and worldwide geo-strategic shifts.
4. It is impossible for Israel to dominate a large Palestinian population for long. Ignoring this fact is the biggest mistake Israel has made since statehood, and it has placed us in a historical trap of our own making.
5. No agreement between Israel and either the Palestinians or Syria will be stable if not anchored in a comprehensive regional arrangement, supported by Islamic countries and world powers, and backed up by Israeli deterrence that threatens disproportional punishment of violations.

In light of the above, Israel must take its statesmanship to a new level, while advancing on two connected axes: promoting peace as part of a comprehensive Middle East agreement and creating a deterrence that will be adequate against fanatic actors armed with weapons of mass murder. One might call it a "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" stance, that is, a purposeful bipolarity. On the one hand, there must be a willingness to make far-reaching concessions and offer good neighbourly relations in exchange for a warm, stable peace, and on the other, there has to be a willingness and clear ability to respond disproportionately to any aggression.

Israeli soldiers prepare to finally leave Gaza in 2005. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

The Arab Peace Initiative, with all its problems, provides a basis for an agreement that would include the moderate Arab countries in the wider context of the Islamic states and global powers. It would be based on the common interest of the rulers of the moderate Arab states, most of the world's powers and Israel in stabilizing the Middle East while promoting economic development and modernization.

This requires a number of policy innovations. Thus, the United States should abandon "democratization" as a policy until conditions change, since in the absence of appropriate socio-economic development, it is a recipe for extremism.

The proposed perspective should lead Israel to four conclusions:

- First, progress in the negotiations with the Palestinians and Syria must be combined with a normalization of Israel's relations with most of the Arab and Islamic countries. Israel should not give up assets or agree, for example, to joint sovereignty over parts of Jerusalem, in exchange for agreements with the Palestinians and Syria alone. Nor can the refugee problem be solved, except in a comprehensive Middle Eastern context.
- Second, Israel must take strong deterrent action against anyone who inflicts harm on it, but it should – as much as possible – do so with the silent agreement of moderate Arab forces, and in a way that minimizes civilian casualties and similar hate-engendering damage.
- Third, because there is no guarantee that a comprehensive peace process will succeed, Israel must craft policies enabling it to thrive, even in the absence of peace and despite a series of conflicts. Such a successful policy also improves the probability of obtaining and stabilizing a Middle Eastern agreement, since it undermines hopes of wearing Israel down in stages.
- Fourth, and as a condition for all the rest, Israel must distinguish between what is important for shaping the future and short-term accomplishments. For example, while full recognition of the State of Israel is a precondition for concessions, the recognition of Israel as a "Jewish state" is without significance – since our essence depends on us, not on others.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, left, and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in 2007. ***[GPO/Israel Sun photo]***

The existence of extremist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah and of a nuclearizing Iran makes a stable peace in the Middle East difficult to obtain. They must be contained and changes in their positions need to be brought about, peacefully if possible, but also through pressure and coercion. Therefore, offering Hamas recognition if it recognizes Israel and joins the peace process, and punishing it if it does not do so is recommended, including maintaining a demonstrated option to destroy it in the event it disturbs the peace process and engages in aggression.

Whatever the best policy may be, Israel is failing to engage in deep historical thinking. The political culture of wheeling and dealing is incapable of it, a blocked regime does not allow for it, the scarcity of multi-dimensional staff work prevents it, and only few of our senior politicians are qualified to do it.

If these failings are not addressed, we are destined to continue on a chain of responses to specific events rather than shaping events, leading to a very problematic future.

Yehezkel Dror is emeritus professor of political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has served as a senior adviser to several Israeli prime ministers.

Opinions

Why is 25 the new 15?

Our current crop of baby boomers has sworn never to grow old, and middle-aged people seem 10 years younger than they actually are. Indeed, 50 is the new 40.

Subtracting by 10 works well with older ages, but what about twentysomethings? Today, younger people are maturing at a slower pace as well. As David Brooks noted in the New York Times: "People... tend to define adulthood by certain accomplishments – moving away from home, becoming financially independent, getting married and starting a family. In 1960, roughly 70 per cent of 30-year-olds had achieved these things. By 2000, fewer than 40 per cent of 30-year-olds had done the same."

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

Twentysomethings are now experiencing a second adolescence.

Why is 25 the new 15?

The relative immaturity of contemporary twentysomethings is rooted in peace and prosperity. Young people in North America don't have to serve in the military, and many can expect to have their parents provide them with cars, clothing and cellphones. This dependence continues well after high school, with parents indulging their kids by paying their rent and covering their credit card bills.

Or, to put it in plain English: we're spoiling our kids. That's why 25 is the new 15.

Unfortunately, handing our children the good life on a silver platter can do more harm than good. There is a kabbalistic idea called "the bread of shame." If someone is handed a loaf of bread without earning it, they lose their dignity, and even if the recipient may be happy to live life on easy street, the fact that his achievements are unearned is an embarrassment to someone created in the image of God.

To truly be a "man," one must be dignified and independent. Trust funds may pay your credit card bills, but they can also destroy your character.

This issue is of great importance to the Jewish community. In one generation, the Jewish world has gone from deprivation to breathtaking wealth. It's normal for a community of immigrants to want to give every advantage to the next generation, and so we spoil our kids. But hard work becomes unimportant when we hand undeserving young men the keys to successful businesses. Spiritual values get lost when materialism becomes the operating principle, which is why too many Jews make bar and bat mitzvahs that are so over the top. Our community has survived, and even thrived, in the most difficult of times due to faith, community and character. Ironically, our community's material success threatens to destroy the very values it was built on.

Adolescent 25-year-olds are not an automatic outcome of material success. It happens when we forget transmit our values to the next generation. If our priority is to provide our children with values, not valuables, we will have children to be proud of.

Israel's Dr. Hug returns – with Montrealers help

In October 2000, Hezbollah terrorists using United Nations vehicles kidnapped Benny Avraham and two fellow soldiers. For more than three years, Benny's parents, Haim and Edna Avraham, along with the parents of Adi Avitan and Omar Sawaid, led a worldwide campaign to free their sons, unaware that Hezbollah had already murdered them. In Israel, Haim Avraham became a national icon representing all fathers who have been forced to send their sons to war, never to see them return.

Gil Troy in Montreal

When Israel finally confronted Benny's killers in 2006, Haim, Edna, and their two daughters, Efrat and Dafna, spent the war visiting soldiers. While distributing goodies to thousands, they spread the message that the war was just and necessary. Haim insisted on embracing every soldier, *lechazek eem chebuuk*, to strengthen with a hug.

This January, Haim and his family took to the road again, this time with assists from Montrealers, particularly congregants of Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz of Congregation Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem and Rabbi Adam Scheier of the Shaar Hashomayim Congregation. As soon as they heard that soldiers needed warm socks, long johns and fleecies, they joined others in Israel and the Diaspora and sprang into action. Thanks to their generosity, Haim, his daughter, Dafna, Haim's colleague, Yoram, and I visited the Gaza front to spread his message with love, idealism and treats.

In one gruelling, inspiring day, we visited an air force base, a tent city of reserve paratroopers, a tank squadron, the engineering corps, crack Givati troops, and a naval base. Particularly moving were the visits with the engineers – it was Benny's battalion – and the reserves – Haim's son-in-law served there. One officer who bristled when he first spied interlopers melted when he recognized Haim, hugging him and saying, "I teach reserve soldiers about that incident all the time, to foster awareness."

Haim told the soldiers that his family had sacrificed repeatedly to build Israel. One relative died in Acre Prison in the 1940s. One sank in the Dakar submarine in the 1960s. Haim's brother, Benny, died during the Yom Kippur War, before his brother's namesake, Benny, fell in 2000. Still, Haim remains patriotic, understanding that such anguished heroism protected millions. Haim honoured me with the opportunity to speak. I told the troops they were the modern Maccabees. I said the Jewish people – and good people worldwide – understand that they represented the forces of freedom in a larger struggle against terror.

The soldiers calm, mature, professional and high-spirited demeanours impressed us. This was not a war of anger and chaos, but of necessity and discipline. No one rejoiced in the civilian casualties – and many spoke of trying hard to minimize civilians' suffering. The soldiers noticed, of course, that Israel always targeted terrorists, and occasionally missed. Hamas always targeted civilians. All wars are ugly, but if there is such a thing as a healing war, a war of correcting past mistakes, this was such a war. All wars are brutal, but if there is such a thing as a moral war, Israel tried to fight within ethical limits.

Soldiers joked about the new phenomenon of a "misgrad" – a *misgad*, a mosque, harbouring Grad missiles, but they detested this kind of blurry urban combat. Still, the soldiers understood that "*ein breira*," we have no choice. They all hoped that this time, they could finish the job. And they desperately wanted to free Gilad Schalit, the kidnapped soldier whose family has endured the kind of hellish purgatory the Avrahams know all too well, for nearly three years.

At the naval base, a young officer thanked Haim for coming. She said her brother's death in combat when he was 18 broke her parents. She admired Haim's ability to function, let alone to move forward, remain positive and retain his idealism. Every time her mother hears of another casualty, she bleakly welcomes the grieving parents into her enveloping black hole. The Avrahams – like the whole family of Israel – have experienced that black hole's horrors. But the Avrahams show us that life continues – and we should appreciate the heroism and devastating sacrifices of the few that keep so many of us safe and free.

One soldier, absorbing all the love, support and generosity that was raining down on him and his comrades, from the homefront and from abroad, exclaimed: "*Tiroo ezeh am yesh lanu*" – look at how special the Jewish people are.

How very true.

Why unions don't like Israel

With a strike at York University stopping the school term in its tracks for weeks, I found myself walking empty corridors with an unsought sense of nostalgia.

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

York on strike reminded me of campuses in a certain country bordered by the Mediterranean and Dead seas, a country where people eat chick pea-based edibles, work in high-tech industries and maul the language of the Bible. When I e-mailed my brother in Be'er Sheva that I was temporarily off-schedule because of a university strike, his response was quick and terse: "You're kidding! Sounds like Israel!"

Other Israelis responded similarly, recognizing something known and familiar in the faraway and snowy Ontario campus. Israeli universities frequently contend with shutdowns because of striking students, professors or adjunct instructors and must extend the academic year well into the summer months.

So you would have thought that the striking union might feel some "solidarity" with Israel, or with their university cohorts. As public opinion began to mount against the union and in sympathy with the more than 50,000 students left without instruction and without recourse, you might have thought the union would feel some kinship with the one country in the Middle East where truly free unions flourish.

But no, the leadership of the striking union, in the midst of negotiations and rallying its members, found time to post a condemnation of Israel for its assault on fellow unions and a university in Gaza, and to call for a right of return for Palestinians "all over the world" and a "boycott" of Israel, while noting that the views of the leadership "do not necessarily reflect those of the membership" that it was trying to rally together in solidarity. Leaving aside the regional politics, it struck me as odd, and perhaps even counter-productive, for the union to feature a potentially divisive issue when it most needed to present a united front.

At the same time, the head of the Ontario division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees introduced a proposal to ban Israeli professors from teaching at Canadian universities unless they publicly denounced their government. Under pressure due to widespread condemnation for this assault on the principle of academic freedom that is the lifeblood of a university, the union head retreated to focus not on individual professors but on Israeli institutions, echoing CUPE national in calling for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions. The national president condemned what he termed Israel's "disproportionate response" to rocket fire from Gaza. CUPE in British Columbia went further, stating that "illegal Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories" was "the primary cause" of both Israeli and Palestinian casualties, and it called for a one-sided ceasefire on Israel's part.

Given Israel's union-friendly atmosphere, and given, too, that Israel offers the broadest rights for women, gays, and political dissidents in the region – causes the unions espouse – one might wonder, why don't these unions embrace Israel?

One answer lies in the admittedly Marxist ideology of the unions' leadership. Some years ago, I asked a Marxist colleague why the far left argues so vehemently against Israel rather than taking up its cause. She responded that early on, Marxists had great hopes that Israel would fulfil the vision of a true socialist culture, characterized by the collectivist ethos of the kibbutz movement. But, she said, not only had the kibbutz movement moved from its early collectivist roots, the state itself did not turn into a socialist entity. Its transmutation from a model inspired by the Russian Revolution to the consumerist, bourgeois model of the West was seen by Marxists as a betrayal.

I wonder, too, whether it's Israel's very evolution as a democracy that rankles the revolutionaries on our continent. There is a long history of "revolutionary" intellectuals justifying massive destruction and the ensuing chaos as necessary vehicles for desired change. In the early 1950s, the French writer Albert Camus incurred the wrath of some French Communists and Marxists when he took issue with their glorification of violence committed in the name of "rebellion" against oppression. Camus understood that some of his "revolutionary" cohorts had betrayed the very ideas of social justice that initially motivated them, justifying the very oppression that they set out to oppose.

The Kirshner File

War in Gaza may have restored Israel's deterrence capabilities

Israel pulled out of the Gaza Strip last week, completing its withdrawal about a day after Barack Obama was inaugurated as the new president of the United States. The Israeli army withdrew after Israel and Hamas bypassed Egyptian mediation efforts and separately declared a unilateral truce.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Claiming that Israel's air, land and sea campaign, Operation Cast Lead, had been a success, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said, "We have reached all the goals of the war and beyond." Defence Minister Ehud Barak was far more emphatic, saying that Israel had created "a new security reality" and won "in a big way."

In fact, there is serious doubt that Israel, having been forced to withdraw too soon by international pressure, has achieved all its objectives. Only a week earlier, Olmert said that the war – the latest round in Israel's bloody struggle with Hamas – would be waged until it suppressed Hamas rocket fire and destroyed Hamas' web of smuggling tunnels .

Yet when Israel announced its ceasefire, the rockets were still flying, just as they had been during the entire three-week war. On the last day of fighting, Hamas launched 19 rockets, some of which slammed into the port city of Ashdod and wounded a woman. And shortly before Israel withdrew, the Palestinians fired eight mortar shells, six of which landed harmlessly in the western Negev. In response, the Israeli Air Force bombed Gaza in a brief raid.

Still more disquieting, from Israel's point of view, is that many of the tunnels used to funnel weapons, munitions, food and medical supplies into Gaza from Egypt remained untouched and operational, prompting Hamas to vow that it would replenish its armoury.

Yet, as Olmert and Barak both said, Hamas has indeed been dealt "a major blow." Israel killed several hundred of its fighters and leaders (including Said Siam, the interior minister, and Salah Abu Shreh, the head of its security apparatus), degraded its military infrastructure and pulverized some of its symbols of power – parliament, police stations and government buildings.

But Israel, having stopped short of activating the third phase of its offensive, did not try to penetrate Hamas strongholds deep inside Gaza's cities and refugee camps, thereby leaving Hamas' assets and the bulk of its fighting force more or less intact. Israel's chief of staff, Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, alluded to Israel's unfinished business when he admitted that "there is still work ahead."

And, of course, Gilad Schalit, the Israeli soldier captured by Hamas in the summer of 2006, still remains imprisoned in Gaza.

By avoiding the most heavily populated areas of Gaza, the Israeli army kept its casualties to a bare minimum – 10 dead, some in "friendly fire" incidents. (Three Israeli civilians were killed and more than 300 were wounded. On the Palestinian side, approximately 1,300 were killed and some 5,000 were wounded).

Nonetheless, Hamas emerged from the bitter conflict in a defiant mood and, more importantly, still in control of Gaza. Its prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh, who spent the war in hiding, claimed that the Palestinians had forged a historical and strategic victory over Israel.

Not quite.

On the eve of the war, Hamas spokesmen, resorting to their usual fire-and-brimstone rhetoric, threatened to decimate an Israeli invasion force, warning that the body parts of its soldiers would be gleefully picked up by the children of Gaza, and that Israel would be met by nasty "surprises." No such things happened. Hamas fighters, taking a leaf out of Hezbollah's playbook, rarely confronted the Israeli army in direct clashes and usually melted into the civilian population, cynically using civilians as human shields.

Shortly before the war broke out, Khaled Meshal, the Syrian-based leader of Hamas and the object of an Israeli assassination attempt in 1997, urged Palestinians in the West Bank to stage suicide attacks against Israelis and mount a third intifadah. The Israeli army and security forces loyal to the Palestinian Authority – which is particularly hostile to Hamas after losing its base in Gaza nearly two years ago in an armed insurrection – foiled such attempts.

And although Hamas' chief allies, Iran and Syria, vehemently denounced Israel, they did not materially assist Hamas, bitterly disappointing its leadership.

Despite Hamas' bluster, Israel appears to have achieved two important goals in this otherwise inconclusive war.

Israel seems to have restored its deterrence capabilities – which were eroded by its less than stellar performance in the 2006 war in Lebanon – on both a local and regional level. In its 34-day confrontation with Hezbollah, Israel did not always display sufficient decisiveness: The air force acquitted itself brilliantly, but the army fell short of the mark. In the Gaza war, however, Israel exhibited no such weaknesses. Israel hit Hamas – an admittedly weaker foe than Hezbollah – hard and and relentlessly.

Israel was accused of deploying disproportionate force, but this accusation was besides the point, since the primary function of an army at war is to win, period. In this connection, Israel's campaign was aimed not just at Hamas, but at Iran and Hezbollah, the spearheads of Islamic radicalism in the Middle East.

Israeli tanks take up positions during the recent war in the Gaza Strip. [Isranet photo]

By any fair measure, Hamas provoked Israel, sowing the whirlwind. Starting in 2001, the second year of the second Palestinian uprising, Hamas fired more than 10,000 rockets and mortars at Israel, committing war crimes under the norms of international law.

The Israeli army reacted by carrying out retaliatory raids, but not with all its might. Israel promised to harden its reprisal policy after unilaterally withdrawing from Gaza in 2005, but never did so, fearing excessive Palestinian civilian casualties. Sharply modifying its policy after Hamas arrogantly rejected Egyptian overtures to renew the six-month ceasefire and brazenly fired scores of rockets and mortars at Israeli communities near the border, Israel, understandably, responded with rage and fury. Israel set a new tone on the first day of this just war of self-defence, bombing military targets in surgical strikes that claimed the lives of more than 200 Hamas fighters, the deadliest toll in decades.

Tragically, innocent Palestinians were killed as well during the course of the war, but Hamas is to blame for their unnecessary deaths. Hamas could have concentrated on building Gaza into a flourishing statelet after Israel's pullout nearly four years ago. Instead, egged on by Iran and Syria, Hamas squandered its resources by choosing to confront Israel in its quest to eradicate the Jewish state.

Israel left Gaza in a shambles, with observers comparing it to an earthquake zone. Five thousand buildings were reportedly destroyed and 20,000 were damaged. Given the scale of the destruction, Hamas may think twice before resuming rocket and mortar barrages. If this proves to be the case, Israel's deterrent policy will be validated. Hezbollah, an Iranian proxy, seems to have been deterred by Israel's bombing of its neighbourhoods in Beirut: Since 2006, the Lebanese border has been quiet. During the Gaza war, Hezbollah held its fire, though it allowed rejectionist Palestinian organizations to lob a few symbolic missiles into Israel.

As far as Hamas' tunnel network is concerned, Israel may well have scored a victory here, too. The United States and the European Union have promised to help Israel stop the smuggling of weapons into Gaza so that Hamas cannot rearm, while Egypt has pledged to act more resolutely in interdicting such transfers.

Beyond that, Israel has warned Hamas that it will pay dearly for aggressive behaviour in the future. As Olmert put it, Israel is ready and able to "respond with force."

Taking these factors into consideration, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni has suggested that Israel has established "a new equation" in the region. Yet ultimately, real, lasting peace can only be achieved through diplomacy, not by force of arms.

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Students use technology to learn about ancient scrolls

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

About 150 Grade 7 and 8 students at Bialik Hebrew Day School had an opportunity to learn about the Dead Sea Scrolls face to face from two experts at Jerusalem's Israel Museum, and to have their questions answered in real time, notwithstanding a time difference of seven hours and a distance of more than 9,000 kilometres.

The hour-long video conference, a pilot project that took place Jan. 19, was preceded by a similar one for the school's teachers last year.

Amir Gissin, Israel's consul general in Toronto, told the students the project is a unique combination of old and new, using up-to-the-minute technology "to enable you to almost physically be in the museum… and help us understand our ancient history."

"It is a great honour for us to be with you across the ocean, so far away," David Ibgui, chief curator of the museum's youth wing, told the students, as they waved to him from the school gym. "We hope very much that this will be a pilot for more projects of this kind."

Ibgui was joined by Adolfo Roitman, curator of the Shrine of the Book, the distinctive white-domed structure that houses the Dead Sea Scrolls on the grounds of the museum.

The two men appeared on a large screen, while the students could see themselves, at least for part of the hour, in a smaller inset at the bottom right corner.

The students have been learning about the scrolls, 16 of which (eight at a time) will be exhibited at Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum later this year.

Roitman told them that about 220 of the more than 1,000 scrolls that were discovered in the caves of Qumran, on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, some 61 years ago, are biblical manuscripts. They include the Book of Isaiah, which is now online.

"Is it not really a magical experience that through the Internet, you and me, we are able to read a text written in Hebrew – the same text we have at home?" asked Roitman, who read familiar quotes from the original parchment with the students.

Although it was hard to decipher the text on the screen, Simona Dayan, Bialik's principal of Jewish studies, noted that "we can read here, from Toronto, the same *psukim* [verses]" in Hebrew.

Among them was the quote, "*Lo yisa goy el goy cherev; lo yilmedu od milchamah* [Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more]."

When Ibgui, in Jerusalem, asked the students why they think it is so important to preserve the original parchments when people are still reading the same words in modern books, four hands shot up in Toronto.

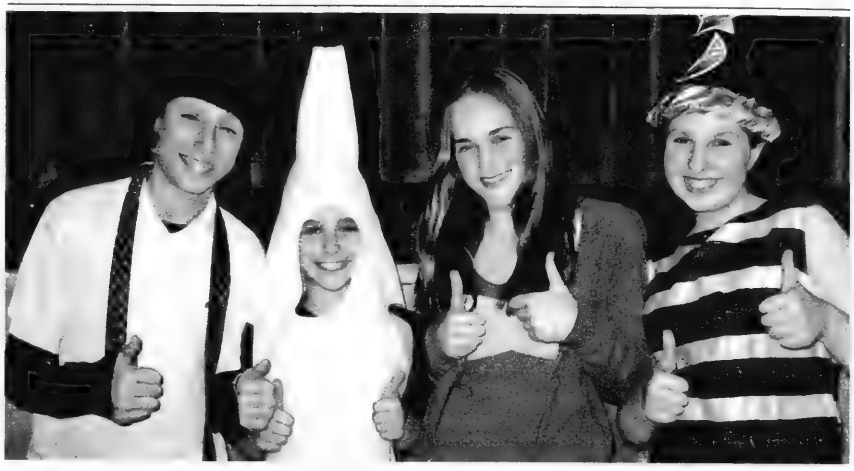
"It's proof that the Jewish religion was real 2,000 years ago," said one girl.

"This is the physical connection of the Jewish people to its land," said Igbui. "The archeologists… actually show that we did not come here [to Israel] to a new place."

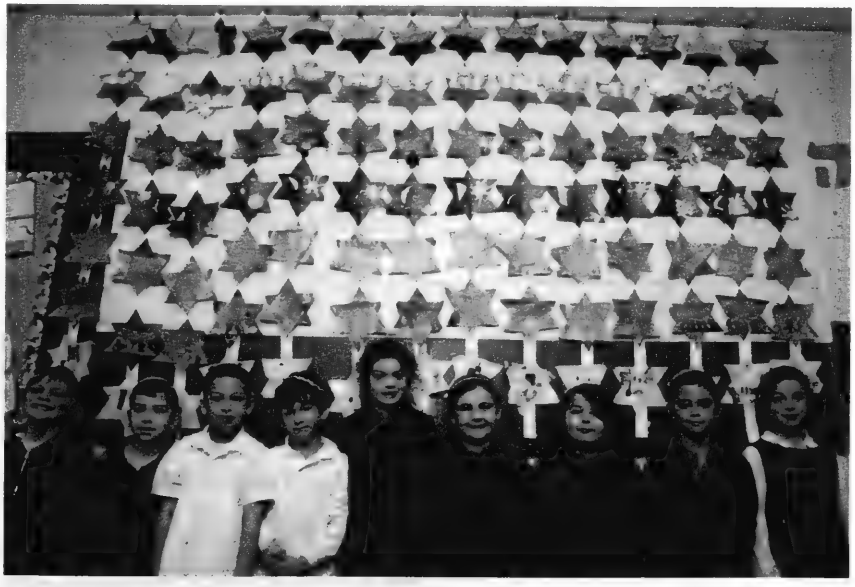
Roitman noted that technology for transmitting messages has changed throughout history. Scribes who wrote books instead of scrolls were using a new "technology" in the eighth century, he said, adding that book technology advanced further with the invention of the printing press, and most recently, the development of electronic books.

As a follow-up, students will prepare their own scrolls and send them to the museum to be buried in jars similar to those in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were found.

"Imagine, 2,000 years from now," said Shana Harris, Bialik's head of school, "students might be looking at some of those scrolls and understanding the important connection of Jewish continuity."



CRUNCHY WINNERS: Members of the four intra-school "houses" in Bialik Hebrew Day School's senior division recently took part in a contest to see how many abdominal crunches they could do in a minute. The winners were, from left, Josh Weisleder of Hebrew University House, who came in second; Dylan Lastman of Bar Ilan-Tel Aviv House, who came in first; Nicole Filler of Ben Gurion-Weizmann House, who came in third, and Lauren Schwartz of Hebrew University House, who placed fourth.



MOBILE CREATION: Inspired by the Star of David series by Israeli painter Dick Ben Dor, Grade 2 students at Netivot HaTorah Day School created their own Magen David mobiles depicting the seven days of creation. Pictured, from left, are Itai, Yakir, Eli, Daniel, Rachel, Atara, Samara, Dani and Alexandra. *[Rebecca Ansel photo]*

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Heschel's Helfand not a stereotypical teacher

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Sometimes people are surprised to learn what Avee Helfand does for a living. With his ponytail, trim beard and low-key approach, he doesn't fit everyone's image of a teacher.

New acquaintances have told him, "You can't be a teacher!" They figure he is "a tree hugger" or even a rocker, he said.

"I try to break those kinds of stereotypes," Helfand, 29, said in a recent interview at the Toronto Heschel School, where he is a Grade 6 homeroom teacher whose subjects include science, math, Mishnah and tefillah.

The focus in his classroom, which has a cluster of spider plants and an aquarium with guppies at the front, is on "creative, hands-on activities with an environmental ethos." He also teaches some science classes to younger students.

A lesson from the teacher: ***"I'll always give someone the benefit of the doubt... We all tend to judge right away."***

The tree hugger designation is not exactly inaccurate. Environmentalism plays a significant role in Helfand's educational philosophy and that of the school.

A founder of Heschel's "Eco Team," the future teacher developed a love of nature on hiking and camping trips with his father to Algonquin Park. He tries to minimize his environmental footprint, being vigilant about recycling, and commuting by bike, public transit or carpool.

However, when it comes to rock, Helfand said, he knows only three guitar chords, and the music he plays in the classroom as background is usually jazz, classical, or instrumental versions of Hebrew songs.

A graduate of the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto – and before that, Associated Hebrew Schools, where his sister Maytal now teaches – Helfand worked with autistic children while he was a B.Ed. student at Queen's University, and for a year after his 2004 graduation. He also has a BA from McGill University, where he majored in sociology and minored in economics.

Helfand, who ran the children's service at Chabad Lubavitch of Markham when he was about the same age as his students, said he has always wanted to work with kids.

The son of Israeli-born parents, Helfand had thought about moving to Israel to teach English, but a chance encounter with a Heschel office staffer changed his plans. "She convinced me the school was for me."

Helfand was drawn to Heschel's integrated curriculum and strong focus on social justice, which spoke to his own interest in helping others.

During Israel's Second Lebanon War in summer 2006, Helfand volunteered in Israeli schools, and in 2003 he served as a volunteer teacher in Guatemala City. Last year he cut off his ponytail, which has since regrown, to donate his hair.

In the classroom, Helfand tries to connect with his students through "small conversations" and learning about their interests. "It allows me to push them as a teacher – to say, 'I know what you're capable of,' not in a 'calling you out' kind of way , but more like, 'I care for you and I want you to succeed."

Helfand, who has been teaching at Heschel for five years, said he wants his students "to [become] individuals who will go out in the world and do something positive."

He believes in giving positive reinforcement and being a good role model, and expects everyone in his class "to be treated equally, to care for each other. We're a community."

Avee Helfand displays a "mini ecosystem" that was a class project four years ago. ***[Frances Kraft photo]***

Kolel course addresses sitcom Judaism

Rosalin Krieger has always been fascinated by Jewish popular culture. "It's such a part of my Jewish cultural experience. I think about it 24/7."

A PhD candidate in sociology and equity studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, Krieger – who has published academic papers and been a conference presenter on Jewishness in television shows – will teach a new course on contemporary constructions of Jewishness in popular sitcoms.

The six-week course, called "Post-Modern Jewishness from 'Seinfeld' to 'Curb Your Enthusiasm,' " will run on Thursday evenings at Kolel: The Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning, beginning Feb. 5.

"I've always been interested in questions of Jewish identity," Krieger, 42, told The CJN in a phone interview. Other issues she expects to address in the course include assimilation and continuity.

"These people in Hollywood want consciously or unconsciously to engage us in the discussion of what it means to be who we are," she said. "I think as Jews we should be part of that."

Closer to home, a trio of Canadian series – Billable Hours, Less than Kind, and most recently Being Erica – signal "what could be a new wave of Jewish-inflected comedy on our side of the border," Krieger said.

The issue of "crypto-Jews" on television – such as the ostensibly non-Jewish, but "stereotypically very Jewish" Costanza family on Seinfeld – is particularly interesting to Krieger, who attended Jewish day school until she was 16. She said she would love to have a chat with Garry Shandling and find out why he never "came out" as Jewish in six seasons of his eponymous show.

For historical context on Jewishness in television, Krieger said, "you have to go back to Gertrude Berg," who created, wrote and acted in a show called The Rise of the Goldbergs, and later just The Goldbergs. The show, originally a radio sitcom, ran from 1929 to the mid-1940s and moved to television a few years later. "Her contribution has been so overlooked," said Krieger.

She said she hopes that participants in the course at Kolel will see the shows as "Jewish texts... beyond entertainment.

"This is a really exciting time for Jewish cultural expression." — F.K.

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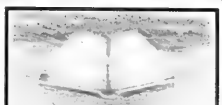
Jewish Life

We need to give Obama time

By RABBI JONATHAN CRANE



Excitement and anxiety accompany the beginning of a new political era. Just as many of us here in Canada are excited by the inauguration of Barack Hussein Obama as the 44th president of the United States of America, so, too, are many anxious about what he might or might not do.

Will he enact policies that our community endorses? Will he be silent on issues that we think require his outspoken leadership? What does it mean if he does or does not do something in a timely manner?

For better or for worse, the first 100 days of a presidency are scrutinized by all and sundry. Pundits and bandits alike examine a president's first few months to ascertain and predict the tenor of his tenure. They compare campaign promises with early presidential action to find inconsistencies and signs of weakness. And when these are found, they are only too delighted to spark disappointment, ignite resistance or even enflame unrest.

I don't envy Obama his job. His responsibilities are many and his constituents are eager for solid, not stolid, leadership. While he has spoken about his programs to engender for the United States a better economy and stature in the global arena, he has simultaneously acknowledged that such goals will take time and effort. Indeed, there may be setbacks along the way. Just as there are dark times now, he says, there may be dark times ahead even as he leads the country – and perhaps much of the rest of the world – toward a brighter, more secure future.

That darkness precedes and follows the beginning of a new era is not novel. In Parshat Bo, we see Moses continuing his fruitless negotiations with Pharoah, who, time and again, refuses to see the wisdom of acceding to Moses' demands for the liberation of his oppressed people. With Moses' diplomacy failing, God finally instructs him to convey to Pharoah that the next stage will be a lethal one and that no immunity will be granted even to the aristocracy. Both literally and figuratively, it promises to be a dark period.

But before this campaign promise is enacted, the narrative is interrupted by time itself – or rather, by time's beginning. God tells Moses and Aaron, "This month shall be for you the beginning of the months, it shall be the first months of the year for you" (Exodus 12:2). The importance of this beginning of time cannot be overstated. It is a recalibration of Jewish time. No longer are Jews to live according to a calendar or schedule set by a master whom they did not choose. From now on, Jews are to count and celebrate time more attuned to the vicissitudes of the cosmos than to human desires. Moreover, as Nachmanides notes, this recalibration of the calendar is the first commandment God gives to the people Israel.

But why now? Why in the midst of their bitter struggle for liberation, should the people be obliged to start their calendars afresh? Why should the Jewish calendar begin precisely at a time when heavy policies were about to happen in the midst of winter and, more precisely, in the dark of night? Perhaps it is so that Jews will always associate time's beginning with the arduous process of liberation, as Rashbam comments. Jewish liberation came about not from a single miraculous event, but from a difficult and lengthy process. For only after time's beginning did the harsh plan God promised pass over Egypt. And even more time was needed before Israel came into its own and achieved (many) of its goals.

The beginning of Jewish time may have been painful for everyone – albeit differently – yet it was also the beginning of an exciting and awesome new political (and theological) era. Just as God needed time to put into place His policies, all the more so should we anticipate Obama requiring time to enact this. In the meantime, perhaps we can find the strength to withhold judgment and the courage to participate in the processes he envisions.

Rabbi Jonathan Crane is rabbinical adviser for Reform students on campus with Hillel of Greater Toronto.

Listening to Tu b'Shvat

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

As the holiday of Tu b'Shvat nears, it signifies the importance of remembering that the connection between Judaism and the environment began in the ancient world. Rather than considering environmental issues to be a fad that captures the moral sensibilities of the 21st century, environmentalism is, in fact, woven throughout Jewish law as an obligation.

Tu b'Shvat is technically considered to be the New Year of the Trees. The practical application of this "birthday" was to calculate the age of a tree for tithing and other ritual purposes.

One would assume that this minor holiday would go the way of other very technical tithing concerns: leave it to the experts to figure out and just tell us what we can and can't eat. Yet, much to our surprise, Tu b'Shvat endures as a meaningful, symbolic and relevant holiday in the modern world.

The Torah mentions several times that humanity is responsible for safeguarding nature. We are forbidden to destroy things needlessly, and, in fact, even when the need is paramount, as in warfare strategy, we are forbidden to level a field of fruit bearing trees. The text teaches us that we may be at war with each other, but we are never at war with nature.

The question of recycling articles that we no longer use is immediately answered by Judaism as a necessity, since the Talmud states it's a sin to destroy anything that can still provide benefit to the world. The focus is removed from whether or not an object is no longer useful to me and expands the question to whether or not the object is of any use to anyone, anywhere.

We would be hard pressed to state that there is no use for anything we have. We discard things because we have fulfilled our use of the object, and not the other way around. The Jewish approach is to remove ourselves from the centre of our universe and gain a more global picture of our world. This is not our choice. We are commanded to do so.

Tu b'Shvat provides us with a day to remember to reframe the way we look at the world around us. Humanity is part of a much larger created picture from which we have isolated ourselves. The midrash states that the trees speak with humanity all the time seeking to become our companions. In fact, according to the midrash, all of nature speaks to all of nature, and only humanity has forgotten the language.

A famous Jewish rabbi, Abraham Isaac Kook, said it beautifully: "All my days I have been careful never to pluck a blade of grass or a flower needlessly, when it had the ability to grow or blossom. You know the teaching of our Sages that not a single blade of grass grows here on Earth that does not have an angel above it, commanding it to grow. Every sprout and leaf says something meaningful, every stone whispers some hidden message in the silence – every creation sings its song."

All we have to do is listen.

Jewish Life

The Babylonians: Part II

By ALEX GROPPER

The Babylonians had a major impact on ancient Israel, especially the neo-Babylonian Empire of Nebuchadnezzar, at the beginning of the sixth century BCE.

The northern kingdom of Israel had been destroyed by the Assyrians more than a century before. The Assyrians had themselves succumbed to the combined might of the Medes and Babylonians in 605 BCE, at the Battle of Carchemish. By 597 BCE, the Babylonians had moved in on the surviving southern kingdom of Judah, destroying the fortress city of Lachish in the process.

Past Forward

Lachish has been excavated by archeologists a number of times. Two of these excavations stand out. One was the British excavation of the late 1930s whose director, James Starckey, was murdered by Arab bandits in 1938. The other excavation was conducted by the renowned Israeli archeologist David Ussishkin, the head of the Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University.

One of the amazing finds of the excavators was the Lachish Ostraca. The ostraca are pieces of pottery inscribed with writing. In addition to being among the oldest examples of Hebrew writing to be discovered, they also bear vivid testimony to the plight of the hapless defenders who were pleading for help from Jerusalem that would never come.

The excavations reveal the depth of the destruction that Lachish sustained, first at the hands of the Assyrians and then more than 100 years later at the hands of the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. But it was Jerusalem that would be the final target of the Babylonians.

For five years, in the late 1970s and early '80s while participating at the City of David Excavations in Jerusalem under Yigal Shiloh, I got to see firsthand the destruction caused by the Babylonian siege and its aftermath. The debris was almost a metre thick in places, and Babylonian arrowheads turned up amid the rubble. Ironically, a toilet still retained its unmistakable odour some 26 centuries later.

We even found some of the reasons why the prophets foretold the destruction of Jerusalem. There amid the destruction debris in the shadow of the Temple, in the households of Jerusalem, we found idols. There was even a *tophet* (a place where children were sacrificed to pagan gods) found in the nearby Hinnom Valley. Indeed, Jerusalem was a desperate place in those years before its final destruction at the hands of Babylonian troops.

Ironically, Babylon would not prove to be as inhospitable a place for our captive ancestors as they had feared. Archeologists have even found a ration list belonging to the last king of Judah during his captivity in Babylon.

More importantly, it was in the multicultural crucible of Babylon that important elements of nascent Judaism would emerge. It was the greatest, and arguably, the most important city of the world in mid-sixth century BCE. Babylon was the Big Apple of the ancient world.

It was in Babylon that our ancestors created a meeting house, or *beit knesset*, what the Greeks would call a synagogue. It was a place where our ancestors could pray, meet and educate their young in their faith. In order to properly do this, they wrote down the stories that had been passed down to them orally by their ancestors.

Scholars even believe that certain Mesopotamian (Mesopotamia is the name given by the Greeks to the land between the two rivers of the Tigris and Euphrates) stories such as that of a great flood even crept into our ancestors' writings.

The work of writing down our collective history and religion was completed by the great scribe Ezra, whom some have called the second Moses. It was in Babylon that the groundwork was laid for resisting assimilation during future trials and tribulations. We went into Babylon as Judeans, but came out as Jews.

Tu b'Shvat on the web, Part 1

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

There's a birthday coming up in your home. Actually the party is taking place in your refrigerator. That's because the evening of Sunday, Feb. 8, is the start of Tu b'Shvat, the traditional Jewish New Year for fruit.

The Jewish Highway

Not one of the major holidays on the calendar, Tu b'Shvat has always had a special significance for schoolkids, the pioneers of Israel and, more recently, to members of the environmental movement. And perhaps because of a lack of formal liturgy associated with the day, many people have crafted new observances to commemorate it. You can find that entire range of celebrations of Tu b'Shvat on the web.

The name of the holiday comes from the day on which it occurs on the Hebrew calendar, the 15th of Shvat. The Hebrew letters that spell the number 15 can be pronounced as "Tu." Tu b'Shvat is not mentioned in the Torah, but is one of the first issues addressed in the Mishnah. **[tinyurl.com/shevat07]**

The day has religious significance because the Torah has certain prohibitions about eating the fruit of young trees. "When you come to the [promised] land and plant any tree bearing edible [fruit], you must avoid its fruit as a forbidden growth. For three years [the fruit] shall be a forbidden growth, and it may not be eaten." (Leviticus 19:23-25) **[tinyurl.com/shevat03]** The annual cutoff point for measuring the age of a tree is Tu b'Shvat.

Nowadays, the holiday has evolved into a kind of Jewish Arbour Day.

One tradition known to every schoolchild in Israel is the planting of trees on Tu b'Shvat. You can peek in on Noam and his kindergarten class doing just that as they plant trees in the town of Modi'in. **[tinyurl.com/shevat05]** Even if you can't make it to Israel for this year's holiday, you can still plant a tree – using your keyboard. The Jewish National Fund's Online Tree Planting Center lets you choose which certificate you'd like to choose with a personalized inscription and the number of trees at $18 each. **[tinyurl.com/shevat06]**

At the same time, you may want to recite the tree planter's prayer, which was composed by Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uzziel, the first Sephardi chief rabbi of the State of Israel. "As for these saplings that we plant before You today, deepen their roots and increase their magnificence, that they may blossom and be accepted among the other trees of Israel for blessing and for beauty. Strengthen the hands of all our brethren who labour in the work of the holy soil and who cause the wilderness to bloom…" **[tinyurl.com/shevat01]**

Actually, trees aren't alone in celebrating their birthday on Tu b'Shvat. Israel's Constituent Assembly, now known as the Knesset, held its first meeting on Tu b'Shvat 5709 (Feb. 14, 1949.) Every year, even members of Knesset mark the day by planting trees. You can find out more at the Knesset's Tu b'Shvat site, where you can plant a virtual tree in the Knesset's virtual forest. **[tinyurl.com/shevat09]**

The Jewish Theological Seminary has put together a marvellous Tu b'Shvat page geared toward activities kids can do both alone and with their parents. These include creating a Tu b'Shvat leaf mobile, discussing why trees need a birthday and Planting a Kitchen Forest. **[tinyurl.com/shevat02]** The Torah tots Tu b'Shvat site has pages to colour, word find and other games. **[tinyurl.com/shevat04]**

The first fruit tree to bloom in Israel is the almond or in Hebrew, the *shekadia*, with its white blossoms. And that also give us the most famous song for the holiday, *Hashkedia Porachat* (The Almond Tree Is Blossoming). You can listen to an excerpt and find the lyrics to the delightful tune online. **[tinyurl.com/shevat08]** If the almond trees aren't in blossom in your neighbourhood – they certainly aren't in mine – you can take vicarious pleasure from these lovely shots from Israel. **[tinyurl.com/ shevat10]** For more holiday songs, try out the Tu b'Shvat Song Finder. **[tinyurl.com/shevat12]**

With Tu b'Shvat almost upon us, you could drop a greeting card in the mail to wish a friend a happy holiday. Better'still, do it electronically with an online postcard. Not only can you celebrate the holiday with these colourful cards – you can do it paper-free! **[tinyurl.com/shevat11]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

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Opinions differ on Gaza winners and losers

As the conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza ended, media analysis of who won and who lost began. Not surprisingly, there were widely differing views on the outcome for each side.

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

In "Winners and losers in the Gaza conflict" (Globe and Mail, Jan. 19), Patrick Martin quoted Israeli analyst Yossi Alpher, who said that Israel won militarily but lost politically.

Martin wrote: "Not only did Israel lose support from some important regional allies – Turkey, Jordan, Qatar – but the worldwide concern for the 'innocent civilians' in Gaza led even the United States and France to vote against Israel's interests in the United Nations Security Council."

The opposite is true for Hamas, Martin added, citing former Palestinian Authority cabinet minister Ghassan Khatib, who said that while Hamas lost militarily, it won politically, gaining support "especially in the West Bank."

Martin argued that this means Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas "may be the biggest loser coming out of this conflict."

Globe and Mail readers got a very different assessment from David Bercuson, director of the University of Calgary's Centre for Military and Strategic Studies, in "Israel changes the facts on the ground, militarily and diplomatically" (Jan. 20).

Bercuson argued that Israel's military victory in Gaza has important political and strategic consequences for Hamas' divided leadership, as well as for Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Bercuson wrote: "Israel taught Hamas in Gaza that it is very easy for its titular leader, Khaled Meshal, and his entourage in Damascus to call for a fight to the last breath against the Zionists. After all, he is protected by Syria. But he has clearly lost touch with the reality of Gaza. Signs of a split are obvious… If both Israel and Hamas [in Gaza] can agree to a long-term, monitored truce, Mr. Meshal will lose all relevancy."

Bercuson also argued that the impact of the anger in the "Arab street" is vastly overstated. He pointed out that Jordan "maintained diplomatic relations" with Israel. And while "Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was especially shrill in condemning Israel… the $141-million Christmas deal between Israeli firms and the Turkish air force to upgrade Turkey's F-4 Phantoms remains intact."

He added: "Israel also taught Hamas that the streets of Europe may be crowded with pro-Hamas demonstrators for a few days or a few weeks, but that European countries, the United States and even Russia and China have no love for Hamas and view it, rightly, as Iran's proxy. And that is not likely to change."

Bercuson concluded: "Israel changed the facts on the ground diplomatically as it did militarily… Hamas has been humbled and with it, Hezbollah and Iran."

In conversation, Jim Lederman, senior Israel analyst for Oxford Analytica, agreed with Bercuson's assessment and then some, claiming that "the fighting has changed the political ecology of the Middle East. For example, the internal Arab split was formalized and institutionalized for the first time at the Doha meeting that only the rejectionists such as Syria, Hezbollah, and Qatar, among others, attended, along with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Lederman continued: "[Egyptian President Hosni] Mubarak, who together with the Jordanians and the Saudis are on the other side of the fence, taught the European leaders that they could stand up to the Iranian-sponsored, Al Jazeera-fostered populist nonsense that a cult of death could masquerade as victimization. As well, in a rebuff to Tehran's determined encroachment into the region, Israel showed that there is a military solution to the Iranian tactics used so successfully in the 2006 Lebanon war."

* * *

In "Israel: Boycott, Divest, Sanction" (The Nation, Jan. 26) Naomi Klein raised her feverish anti-Israel rhetoric to another level. She urged singling out Israel for a boycott/divestment/sanctions (BDS) campaign precisely because the tiny Jewish state – as opposed to big countries, such as the United States and Britain and other "western countries" that are doing "the same" things in Iraq and Afghanistan – is an easy target, meaning the campaign "could actually work."

Perversely, Klein thus proudly admits to being a bully.

Paul Michaels is communications director with the Canada-Israel Committee.

Correction

The story "Canadian agencies get $2.3M from Claims Conference" (CJN, Jan. 22) contained an incorrect figure. The Claims Conference gave Baycrest $55,000.

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Israelis move to Winnipeg to escape Qassams

BY RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Israelis from southern Israel have immigrated to Winnipeg within the last year, in part, due to the trauma of living with ongoing rocket attacks launched by Hamas.

"One of the reasons we came here was because of the [deteriorating] security in the south of Israel," Felix Kavoushanski told The CJN. He immigrated from Ashkelon seven months ago.

"My daughter, who is seven, was in a state of panic when sirens went off all of the time in Ashkelon… We had 12 seconds from the time a siren went off to get into a shelter… Sometimes the siren wasn't working and it didn't go on at all."

Kavoushanski, whose parents are still in Ashkelon added, "When we got to Winnipeg, my daughter heard a siren one day from a fire engine. She said, 'What's that, a Qassam?' We said, 'No, there aren't any Qassams here.'"

Kavoushanski's wife, Victoria, who also has family in Ashkelon, said that the couple's friends in Ashkelon had been taking turns staying up all night so they would be alert when the time came to wake up their children to get them to a bomb shelter.

Vladislov Bogomolny, a computer programmer and his wife, Marisa Risman, a teacher, moved here just over half a year ago, with their two young children, also, in part to get out of the difficult security situation in Ashkelon.

"The real threat [of continuous Qassams] began one year ago, and people started to consider leaving Ashkelon to find a safer place," Bogomolny said. "Some moved to Ashdod, others to Tel Aviv… We considered safety reasons and decided to take a major step. If Israel had fought back earlier, maybe I wouldn't have had to leave."

Risman, whose mother is still in Ashkelon, said, "Some days there were sirens eight times a day… Children get very afraid about the Qassams. When the siren goes off, they begin to cry."

Eddie Zoruval, a recent immigrant to the city from Be'er Sheva, was a driver in the Israeli Defence Forces. "If I were in Israel now, I would have been fighting in Gaza," he said.

"I decided to leave Israel after the second war in Lebanon because the Israeli government wasn't doing enough to protect its citizens."

Zoruval said his parents, brother and his brother's family in Be'er Sheva have been frightened by the Grad missiles that have landed nearby.

"My brother's wife is nine months pregnant and looking after her three-year-old. They can't make it in time to the bomb shelter, so they just have stayed at home," he added.

Michael Cantor, a transport engineer, who moved to Winnipeg from Be'er Sheva in March 2008, said his parents in Be'er Sheva have been "a little bit afraid."

"We have talked about them coming here to live, if the security situation doesn't get better in the south of Israel," he said.

Moshe Kanevsky, an Israeli from Be'er Sheva who also moved here recently, said that although his family misses him, "they are glad I am here, and not in the shelters with them." He added that his parents, sister, brother and other family in Be'er Sheva are "afraid" of the missiles and his brother's children have undergone "trauma."

In the second week of Israel's offensive in Gaza, Kavoushanski, Cantor, and Kanevsky also shared their stories with CBC Radio One here, in an effort to explain what Israeli residents in the south of Israel have been undergoing as a result of Hamas attacks.

Cantor was interviewed by Margaux Watt on her show Up To Speed and Kanevsky was interviewed by Terry MacLeod on the program Information Radio.

Baycrest gets top marks for studying the aging brain

Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute (RRI) is one of the top neuroscience programs in the world, as well as a wonderful resource for targeted brain fitness product development efforts, with both governmental and private investors, says an external review panel of highly respected scientists from Canada, the United States and Europe.

The international panel was in Toronto last November to conduct a five-year review of the RRI, which in its 20-year history has built a stellar reputation in the science of the aging brain and the ability to attract some of the world's most eminent brain researchers (including Endel Tulving, Fergus Craik and founding RRI director Donald Stuss).

The panel – led by Dr. Robert Knight, director of the Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute at the University of California, Berkeley – ranked the RRI as a world-class cognitive neuroscience program as comparable to those at UC Berkeley, UCLA, University College London and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In the field of memory and aging, RRI scientists "are probably the best in the world," the panel reported in its executive summary.

The RRI's excellent theoretical science and use of on-site imaging technologies have produced promising cognitive rehabilitation strategies for adults who are experiencing diminishing mental powers from normal aging, stroke, diseases such as Alzheimer's, or traumatic brain injury. RRI science is also informing evidence-based lifestyle strategies that have the potential to slow cognitive decline and help adults extend their functional independence longer.

The panel pointed to last spring's Ontario government announcement that it will fund the creation of the Baycrest Centre for Brain Fitness as a first step toward private sector partnerships in the development of innovative technologies that help Canada gain a foothold in the fast-growing and lucrative brain fitness market. The Baycrest Centre for Brain Fitness will develop and commercialize a range of products from a cognitive assessment tool for the doctor's office to brain fitness products for the home and workplace.

"Partnerships, like the ones we have through the Centre for Brain Fitness and with academic facilities and funders, have a significant impact on our ability to move science toward our goal of transforming the way people age," says Dr. William E. Reichman, president and CEO, Baycrest.

"They are integral to strengthening our ability and dedication to scientific inquiry and innovation in clinical care. This will help our society cross the critical threshold of preventing or delaying the onset of age-related disorders of the brain."

Series of fundraisers benefit brain injury group

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

What would you do if you could no longer recognize yourself in the mirror?

How would you cope knowing that yesterday you were someone vibrant, happy and full of potential, but that starting today, your life might consist only of depression, confusion and pain as you tried to recapture your former self?

These and other existential questions are asked almost every day by many of the 50,000 Canadians who incur serious brain trauma each year, 20,000 of whom eventually die of their injuries, according to statistics from the Brain Injury Association of Canada (BIAC).

That's why BIAC and the Brain Injury Society of Toronto are helping to raise awareness of a subject that often flies below the radar for most Canadians when they think about where to make charitable donations, says Howard Brown, BIAC's founding director.

"We need to absolutely increase the profile of this issue," Brown told The CJN last week.

According to BIAC, brain injuries are the "number 1 killer and disabler of people under 40."

The public fundraising for BIAC takes the form of an annual dinner gala called the Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey. The theme was chosen because oysters contain high levels of zinc, which is thought to be a vital mineral in keeping the brain performing at peak capacity.

Brown – whose cousin, Steven Sieber, succumbed to a traumatic brain injury in 2001 at age 46 after being hit by a car in 1977 – also serves as BIAC's fundraising chair and is the inspiration behind the yearly event.

He and his wife, Kim Cohen – who together run the Toronto PR firm Brown & Cohen Communications & Public Affairs Inc. – make effective use of their personal and business contacts to attract big-name donors, politicians and supporters to the events.

Through their efforts, the Odyssey dinner has recently morphed into a national event, with fundraisers taking place each year in cities across the country.

Brown has called the dinners "an act of tikkun olam."

Despite the economic downturn, he said he hopes donors will continue to give to his charity, and he'll encourage them to do so at this year's Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey dinners.

"My hope this year is that Canadians will see brain injury as a cause they want to get behind in the way they do for more traditional causes," he said, adding, "we want to become the next Terry Fox Run."

This year's Toronto fundraiser – now in its fifth year – takes place Feb. 2 at a midtown restaurant. Similar events in Ottawa, Saskatoon, Montreal, Halifax, St. John's, Vancouver, Charlottetown, Edmonton and Winnipeg will follow, ending with a final dinner in Fredericton.

At the dinners, guests are bedecked with leis and 1960s-era surfer music pumps through the speaker system. An oyster-shucking contest is also part of the fun, and Hawaiian punch is served to all.

As well, attendees hear from the evening's VIPs, survivors of brain injuries who courageously recount their sometimes sad, sometimes inspiring stories and appeal for contributions and help from their local communities in a bid to increase awareness of this debilitating condition.

Donors are also encouraged to bid lavishly on items in silent auctions.

Last year's Toronto gala raised more than $100,000 through corporate and private donations.

For more information about this year's campaign, or to donate, visit www.hawaiianoysterodyssey.ca.

TZEDAKAH CUT: A little more than a year ago, Chloe Mihaleto, now 8, decided to donate her hair to an organization that provides wigs and hair replacement to kids who have lost their hair due to cancer treatment. After letting her locks grow, the Leo Baeck Day School Grade 3 student recently had them shorn for Angel Hair for Kids, a program of Child's Voice Foundation. She's pictured before and after her haircut.

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Feature

Finding love in shopping

By RABBI REUVEN BULKA

Guest Voice

My most recent visit to Israel, coming as it did in the midst of Israel's efforts in Gaza to halt the rain of deadly missiles into its heavily populated cities, was unique. It was the first time in all my more than 100 visits to Israel that the highlight of my stay was a shopping spree in Tel Aviv.

I know it sounds absurd, but it is true. It is true even though the trip, a yearly Rabbinic Cabinet of State of Israel Bonds mission, had many of the expected ingredients, including a security briefing, a lecture on the challenges of media biases and hearing from some residents in the south of Israel.

There was even a meaningful bar mitzvah celebration for a child from Sderot, whose celebration had to be postponed because of the dangerous reality in Sderot.

Shopping for vegetables at the Tel Aviv market last October. [*Miriam Alster/Flash90 photo*]

There was a visit to Be'er Sheva, where we saw the point of impact of a Grad missile into a school. Had the school been open when the missile hit, the entire class would have killed. Thankfully, the Be'er Sheva mayor had ordered the school closed for that day, and it remained closed for a few more weeks. The day after our Be'er Sheva visit, another missile rained on Be'er Sheva, causing injury and damage.

In spite of all these "highlights," the shopping spree in Tel Aviv was the biggest highlight. You are probably scratching your head in wonder. So, let me explain.

A while ago, the municipality of Tel Aviv decided that it must do something for the residents of the south. Its people have long suffered from the constant barrage of missiles. Hundreds of deaths, many more injuries, extended psychological trauma, closing of schools, inability to live a normal life are all the result of this constant terror.

Additionally, the impact on businesses in the south has been devastating, with attendant severe impact on families trying to eke out a livelihood. So, Tel Aviv invited the businesses of the south to bring their wares to a gigantic hall, about the size of a football field, to the port in north Tel Aviv. For two days, this market became the centre of business in Tel Aviv.

All the merchants of Tel Aviv had to know that this would draw away customers and reduce their business. But that did not matter. What mattered was that everyone had to do something to help their brethren in their travail. And they did.

What a remarkable sight it was. Not the fact that so many businesses showed up and exhibited their wares, everything from Judaica, clothing and wine to vegetables, cake, flowers, cosmetics and jewelry. What was remarkable, indeed truly inspirational, was the explosion of people who came to the market. It was almost impossible to walk in the hall, so full was it.

People like me who came from abroad were overwhelmed. We bought as much as we could, whether we needed the items or not, just to be part of this love-fest.

What a defining moment it was – to see a city open its heart in such a massive display of empathy. This was more than a market – this was a display of love and appreciation, a manifestation of understanding and compassion. It was community as it should be. It was Israel at its very best.

There have been other such expressions, including people opening their homes to residents under siege – residents of the north urging the people of the south, who welcomed them a few years ago during the Katyusha siege, to join them for respite, prayer vigils, and the list goes on.

But the Tel Aviv market was the biggest display of love. One could not help but come away full of confidence and hope – that Israel full of love will overcome the dark forces of hate and prevail in its simple desire to live in peace.

Rabbi Reuven Bulka is spiritual leader of Congregation Machzikei Hadas in Ottawa and co-president of Canadian Jewish Congress.

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YIDDISH CORNER

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יידיש־ווינקל

רעדאַגירט פֿון: אַלעק סילווער

איז עס גוט פֿאַר יידן?

פֿון אַלעק סילווער

וועג איר וועט לייענען דאָס קעפּל איבער דעם אַר־טיקל, ווייל איך אייך זאָגן, אַז עס שטאַמט נישט פֿון מיר. וועג איר וועט לייענען וויטער וועט איר זען פֿון וואַ־נען די שורה שטאַמט.

א היפֿש ביסל יאָרן גייט שוין אַרום אַזא מין ווייַן, אַדער אַנעקדאָט (רופט עס ווי איר ווילט). איך א הויכער לערער־אינסטיטוט אין לאָנדאָן, ענגלאַנד, האָט א פּראָ־פעסאָר נעלערנט פילאָסאָפֿיע מיט א גרופּע סטודענטן פֿון פּאַרישידענע קאָנטינענטן, ראָסן און קאָלירן. פּאַר די עקזאַמענס אין מיטן יאָר האָט דער פּראָפעסאָר באַשלאָסן צו געבן זיינע סטודענטן א ספּעציעלע אויפגאַבע. ער האָט די בעהייסן שרייבן אַן עסיי וועגן דעם עלעפאַנט. ער האָט זיי אויך אינסטרוקטירט, אַז די קעפּלעך פון די עסיינ זאָלן זיין מיט גרויסע אותיות אין מער־ווייניק געבן אַן איבערבליק וועגן וואָס די עסיי איז געשריבן.

און דאָ איז אַן אויסוואָל פון א צאָל קעפּלעך: דער ענגלישער סטודענט האָט געשריבן: „דער עלעפאַנט און די ברימשע אימפּעריע"; דער פראַנצויזישער האָט געשריבן: „דער עלעפאַנט און די רעוואָלוציע"; דער אַמעריקאַנער האָט געשריבן: „דער עלעפאַנט איז שטאַרקער ווי אַמעריקע"; דער אפריקאַנער האָט גע־שריבן: „דער עלעפאַנט און זיין רעכט אין דעם שקלאַפן־האַנדל"; דער בראזיל־סטודענט האָט גע־שריבן: „דער עלעפאַנט — האָט ער ליב קאָוועַ"; און אזוי ווייטער און ווייטער. וואָס האָט געשריבן דער יידישער סטודענט? „דער עלעפאַנט — איז עס גוט פֿאַר יידן".

פון דאַן אַן איז שוין געבליבן די פּראָגע ביים יידישן פֿאָלק. וואָס עס זאָל נישט געשען אויף דער וועלט — גוטע נייעס אַדער שלעכטע נייעס, פּריילעכע אַדער טרויעריקע נייעס, רעוואָלוציעס, קאַטאַסטראָפֿעס, ענדערונגען פון רעגירונגען און נאָך אַנדערע געשע־נישן, פֿרעגט מען באַלד: „איז עס גוט פֿאַר יידן". אין די לעצטע יאָרן האָט מען שוין צוגעגעבן: „איז עס גוט פֿאַר מדינת ישראל?

א סך מאָל זיינען יידן גאָר ווייט אוועק פון דעם וואָס האָט פאַסירט. אבער די וועלט האָט שוין א גרייטן ענטפער: עס איז די שולד פון יידישן פֿאָלק! דער פּריערדיקער פּירער פון דער אינדיאַנער נאַציע איז קא־נאַדע האָט באַשולדיקט יידן, אַז זיי האָבן אָנגעהויבן די צווייטע וועלט־מלחמה. איך דעם 2001 טעראר־אקט אין אַמעריקע האָט מען באַשולדיקט די יידן אוך אויפגעוויזן, אַז א גרויסע צאָל יידן איז דעם טאָג נישט געגאַנגען צו דער אַרבעט.

אָקעגן וואָס שרייב איך דאָס? דער נייַ־אויסדר־ווייליטער 44טער פרעזידענט פון פאַראיניקטע שטאַטן באַראַק הוסיין אָבאַמאַ — איז עס גוט פֿאַר יידן, אַדער פֿאַר מדינת ישראל?

מיין ענטפער איז: איך ווייס נישט. עס וועט זיכער דויערן א לענגערע צייט ביז מיר וועלן קענען געבן א פאַזיטיוון ענטפער אויף דער האַזיקער פראגע. איך האָב דעם נאָמען נישט געהערט ביז צו דעם וואָל־קאַמפּיין, וואָס איז אָנגענאַנגען אין די פאַראיניקטע שטאַטן. די ענגליש־יידישע פּרעסע איז די פאַראיניקטע שטאַטן אין מדינת ישראל — ספּעציעל די אַרטאַקסישע — האָט שטאַרק אָנגעגריפן די קאַנדידאַטור פון דער דעמאָקראַטישער פּאַרטיי, אָבאַמאַ. איצט זיינען די וואָלן שוין אַדורך. אָבאַמאַ איז דערוויילט געוואָרן ווי דער פּרעזידענט פון די פאַראייניקטע שטאַטן אין בלייבט נאָר איבער די אַלטע פראגע: איז עס גוט פֿאַר יידן? מיר וועלן מחזק וואַרטן און האָפֿן.

Feature

Tel Aviv to mark its centennial this year

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Tel Aviv's beachfront today [Sheldon Kirshner photo]

TEL AVIV — The world's biggest Hebrew-speaking city, Tel Aviv, is getting ready to uncork a panoply of projects and festivities to mark its 100th anniversary in 2009.

"We're planning to use centennial events to promote Tel Aviv," said Eytan Schwartz, a member of the Centennial Year Administration. "We hope they will be to Israel what the summer Olympic Games were to China."

In an interview, Schwartz said that Tel Aviv, population 400,000 excluding its suburbs, will be promoted as a liberal, outgoing, tolerant and multicultural city.

Tel Aviv will also be showcased as a Jewish destination, he added. "This is where Zionism and modern Hebrew took root," he noted.

Planned as a garden suburb of Jaffa, with wide streets and boulevards, Tel Aviv was founded by the members of the Ahuzat Bayit Society.

In 1908, when the modern Zionist movement was still in its infancy, the group bought five hectares of undeveloped land along the beachfront northeast of Jaffa, which was primarily inhabited by Muslim and Christian Arabs.

One of the founding fathers, Meir Dizengoff, would be Tel Aviv's first mayor. After his death, a major street was named in his honour.

On April 11, 1909, the purchasers gathered on the sand dunes along the Mediterranean Sea to divide their acquisition into 60 plots.

The following year, they decided that the city of their dreams would be called Tel Aviv, or Spring Hill.

Growing by leaps and bounds, Tel Aviv attained municipal status in the early 1930s.

On the eve of Israel's declaration of independence in 1948, its population was 230,000.

Due to the Arab blockade of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv was Israel's first capital. In 1949, Tel Aviv and Jaffa were amalgamated. Today, more than 90 per cent of its population is Jewish.

Tel Aviv's centennial year will officially start on April 11, Schwartz said.

Schools are preparing special programs to mark the occasion. Field trips and subsidized class visits to museums, theatres and exhibitions will reinforce students' acquaintance with the city.

Residents will be invited to contribute family photographs to exhibitions, and 1,000 billboards celebrating Tel Aviv's passage from village to metropolis will be festooned around the city.

A history museum will be inaugurated at the site of the old city hall. Its first exhibit will focus on artistic representations of Tel Aviv.

A marathon race from Tel Aviv to Jaffa is in the works, as is a bicycle race. Three new walking paths exploring Tel Aviv's Bauhaus architecture heritage are being built.

The port of Jaffa and the Trumpeldor Street cemetery, the city's first, will be renovated.

And in a tribute to Dizengoff, a statue of him riding a horse will be unveiled on Rothschild Boulevard, the city's first important thoroughfare.

Tel Aviv's annual book fair will return to its original home in the heart of the city, at Rabin Square, and the Eretz Israel Museum will present an exhibition of antiques and artifacts excavated by archeologists in Tel Aviv and Jaffa.

The Turkish-era train station near Neve Tzedek – the first Jewish neighbourhood in what is now Tel Aviv – will be fully restored.

Nearby, opposite Jaffa's clock tower, the Turkish government is building a cultural centre, to be known as the Saraya.

Amid this flurry of activity, the Habima National Theatre, a fixture in the city for decades, is being completely renovated and expanded.

Schwartz can hardly contain his excitement.

"The centennial is a wonderful opportunity for people to say, 'Hey, let's spend two or three more days in Tel Aviv."

Tel Aviv arose on the sand dunes facing the Mediterranean Sea. This historic photograph, snapped in 1909, shows founding members of the city.

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On Campus

Laurier professor calls Jewish students 'nefarious'

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Jewish students at Wilfred Laurier University (WLU) say they feel threatened by a professor who has organized four impromptu anti-Israel rallies during which he singled out Jewish Students' Association members as being "nefarious."

Since the start of the semester and 11 days into the Israel-Gaza war, WLU sociology professor Peter Eglin has been holding unbooked rallies in a public area of the Waterloo, Ont., university known as the Concourse to persuade students, faculty and administration to take a stand against Israel.

"He was trying to rally support, and making a request that the administration make a public statement condemning Israel's bombing of [the Islamic University in Gaza]," said Alex Kaldor, president of the JSA at Laurier and the University of Waterloo.

Despite calls from the administration not to proceed with a rally because he hadn't properly booked the space, Eglin, who is on sabbatical this year, pressed ahead.

As of mid-January, Eglin had held four separate rallies in the space.

In an e-mail Eglin sent out to spread the word of his fourth rally, which took place Friday, Jan. 16, he said he would be speaking about "Israel's war crimes in Gaza… The ongoing killing of Palestinians and associated atrocities… The continuing abrogation of intellectual responsibility by the academic community at WLU [and] the nefarious actions of the Jewish Students' Association."

Kaldor said the JSA is a cultural and social organization that had not made any political statements about the war and was upset about Eglin's accusations.

"We showed up on Friday to basically show this professor that we don't take lightly to him calling our students and our organization 'nefarious,'" he said.

"There was somewhat of an open mic forum set up, and a number of students felt the need to stand up and counter what he was saying in support of Israel."

Kaldor said he respects the professor's right to speak freely, but when Eglin began to verbally attack the students who spoke up in defence of Israel, he knew he couldn't stay silent.

Chanie Antfleck, a WLU student and a member of the JSA, was one of the students who engaged in an argument with the professor.

Antfleck said that when she and Daniel Lipworth, another WLU student and JSA member, took to the microphone to defend Israel, Eglin said, "Those who believe that what Israel has been doing for the past 40 years is correct is morally corrupt and shouldn't be in a university."

Antfleck added: "He targeted the Jewish students by saying, 'You Jewish students… Look at you. You're such a disgrace. Look at the way you're carrying on."

She said that when she challenged Eglin for using the word "nefarious" at the rally to describe the JSA, he countered by saying he should have used the words "devious and underhanded," before telling her to "Shut up, for God's sake."

Michael Mostyn, B'nai Brith Canada's public policy director, attended the latest rally on Jan. 16.

"We had a professor here who was attacking a Jewish student group and students directly, and it is just a fundamental power imbalance, and I don't know how the university is allowing something like this to take place," Mostyn said.

"Students get fined when they break rules in schools. Why do professors not get fined when they are blatantly breaking the rules?"

Since the last incident, meetings between the university administration and members of the JSA have taken place.

"We are currently in communication with administration and the president of the university, [and] with the dean of students, and we are trying to present what we feel is an unsafe learning environment and an unsafe environment on campus in the hopes that they will take action against this professor," Kaldor said.

University spokesperson Kevin Crowley, dean of students David McMurray and Eglin didn't respond to requests for interviews, but in a statement, the school said that it "supports the widely held view that academic freedom, including the unfettered dissemination of knowledge and exchange of ideas, is an integral part of the university mandate. We, therefore, support open discussion, respectful debate and civil discourse. We are also committed to providing our students with a safe environment.

"In an effort to honour both commitments, university officials have met with and will continue to meet with representatives of the Jewish Students' Association to discuss their concerns and explore solutions; discussed concerns with Prof. Eglin, and provided security presence at all related events to enhance the safety of everyone present."

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Anti-Israel posters removed at U of M

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Posters put up at the University of Manitoba by the school's Muslim Students Association (MSA) that contained images of a swastika next to the Star of David were removed after a complaint by a campus Jewish group.

The posters prompted Samantha Loxton, director of the Jewish Students Association/Hillel, to make a complaint to campus security on Jan. 8.

"The posters had images of a swastika, and then a Star of David, and these two images were recycled in a row," Loxton said.

"This is the first time I have seen anti-Semitic stuff like this at the U of M," she added.

The JSA had set up an information booth on campus concerning Israel's recent military operation in Gaza, and in response, the MSA put up its own booth and the posters.

Loxton said that the MSA took down the posters after they were instructed to do so by U of M security.

John Genakes, director of public affairs at U of M, said the MSA "gave assurances to university officials that the posters would not be put up again."

חדשה בקנדה

נינה שנהב

"אז תבטיחי לי שתחקשרי!" מתחננת אליסון, בעודה אוחזת בידי בהתרגשות, וחצי דמעה מנצנצת לה בעין. אני כמעט דומעת בעצמי. "מבטיחה!" אני מגיבה ברגש (רגע, יש לי בכלל את הטלפון שלה?) למזלי, אליסון מושיבה: "בעצם אני אתקשר. כבר מחר בבוקר אתקשר." היא נושקת לי, ומוסיפה "ניפגש מחר ללאנץ." מאיר ואני ישובים במכונית, ונוסעים הביתה בנועם. "היה ערב מהמם." אני מתמתחת בפינוק. "ראית איזה מקסימים הארי ואליסון? הם פשוט התאהבו בנו. ממש מביך." אני מושיבה בשחצנות מנומנמת. מאיר מהנהן, ואני ממשיכה "וגם דיאנה, החברה של אליסון, היתה מקסימה. איזה יופי שהלכנו למסיבה הזו. אני רק מקווה שאליסון לא תהיה חברה תוצענית מדי. אתה יודע, היא כל כך התלהבה ממני... שרק לא תהיה קנאית אם אצא ללאנצ'ים עם אחרות..."

למחרת בבוקר, אני דוחה פגישה בצהריים, כי אליסון הרי הבטיחה שתתקשר ושנצא לנו. בערב, אני כבר די בטוחה שלא נצא היום ללאנץ', גם למחרת היא לא מתקשרת, וגם לא בעבור שבוע.

"נורא מוזר." מתוודה מאיר. "איך שהיא ודיאנה היבקו אותך בסוף האירוחה, הייתי בטוח שיש לי כבר סיבה לדאוג בקשר לנטיות המיניות שלך." אני מסכימה איתו לחלוטין. "וגם אנחנו כל כך דומות: צוחקות מאותן הבדיחות, משתגעות על אותה המוסיקה, אותה האומנות, אותם השלברטיז."

אנחנו שותקים בהירהור, ולפתע הכל ברור לי: "אליסון איבדה את מספר הטלפון שלי!" אני קוראת. "זה הגיוני." מסכים מאיר. "עכשיו את יכולה בשקט להתקשר אליה." אני שמחה בדיוק לרבע שנייה. "אבל...אבל היא לא נתנה לי בסוף את המספר שלה. ואני גם לא ביקשתי; כי כל כך הייתי בטוחה שהיא תתקשר." מאיר חושב. "יומה עם דיאנה? גם היא נשקה אותך ואמרה שאת בחורה מדהימה ויצירתית. אולי תתקשרי אליה, ותך כדי, תבקשי את המספר של אליסון! הרי הן חברות כל כך צמודות."

"זה רעיון טוב, רק שגם דיאנה תיקחקה את מספר הטלפון שלי בסלולארי שלה, ושכחה לתת לי את שלה. אוף!"

למחרת, אחרי אינספור טלפונים ובירורים, אני משיגה סוף סוף את הטלפון של אליסון, חבריתי האבודה. נירגשת מאוד אני מתקשרת אליה. "אליסון! מתוקה! איבדת את הטלפון שלי, האי!" מתעבר השני – שתיקה, ולבסוף בטון קריר וזהיר: "מי זה?" אני מאבדת טיפה ביטחון: "זו נינה!" אליסון: "מי?" אני מאבדת כמה טיפות נוספות של ביטחון: "נינה! מהמסיבה? לפני שבוע!" אליסון (בשמחה!): "אה כן, נינה. מותק! מה שלומך! כל כך טוב לשמוע ממך!" אני (נרגעת): "כן, גם אותך. חיכיתי לטלפון ממך. אמרת שנלך ללאנץ', או משהו." אליסון (בנימת צער): "נכון, נכון, אבל הייתי טרבלי עסוקה השבוע. טרבלי." אני (מנסה שלא להיעלב): "טוב, אז בואי נקבע משהו לשבוע הזה. מה קורה איתך מחר?" אליסון (שוב בצער): "מחר ממש לא טוב. סורי."

אני מנסה לקבוע איתה למחרתיים, לאחרי מחרתיים, לשבוע הבא, לא הולך. אליסון מסמסת שהיא כבר תתקשר אלי.

אני כבר יודעת בלב, שהיא לעולם לא תתקשר אלי.

מאיר מחבק אותי, ומנסה להשביר: "זו לא הפעם הראשונה. נתקלנו כבר באנשים פה שהבטיחו לנו שישארו איתנו לעולם ועד, ולא שמענו מהם יותר לעולם ועד." והוא צוחק. אבל בכל זאת, היה נראה לי שאליסון ואני זה סיפור אהבה. "אולי היא פשוט לא יכולה להכיל יותר מחברה אחת טובה, כמו דיאנה שלה." אני אומרת במרירות, בעודי נזכרת שאליסון הכירה לי את דיאנה, חברתה, באותה המסיבה. "דיאנה היא בחורה גם מאוד חביבה." מציין מאיר. "גם אותה אהבת מאוד. אולי היא פתוחה ליותר חברויות? תתקשרי." מעודד אותי מאיר.

שוב אני הופכת עלומות ומשיגה את מספר הטלפון של דיאנה. שוב לוקח לחברה האבודה השנייה יובלות עד שהיא נזכרת מי אני. "אז חשבתי לי," אני אומרת לה בתום שלב הזיהוי המצמרר, "שאולי נצא ללאנץ', ונכיר קצת יותר האחת את השנייה. כלומר, אם זה בסדר מבחינת אליסון..." דיאנה שותקת לרגע, ואז מתעניינת בקצרה: "מי זו אליסון?"

מתברר שמאיר צדק. זה לא אישי. (אליסון ודיאנה אף הן הכירו באותו ערב במסיבה, התחברו מאוד, ולא שקלו אפילו להמשיך את הקשר). הקנדים באמת רוצים להיות חברים לעולם ועד, הבעיה היא, שהם לא יזכרים את זה בערך שתי שניות אחרי שהם אומרים לך ביי...

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Happy fifth birthday to Emma-Belle Freid. You're our angel. Love, Mommy and Daddy.

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Happy 90th birthday Bubbie Thelma!

Mazel tov to our pride and joy, Rachel Petrinec, on her 10th birthday. Mom, Dad, Bubbie, Zaide, aunties, uncles and cousins all love you.

Mazel tov to Justin Louis Rother on his bar mitzvah. Love, Mom, Dad, Max and Ben.

Happy seventh birthday, Alex. Mazel tov to your proud parents Heidi & Paul Giannoulis. Love, Bubbie Leanna Starke and Great-Bubbie Trudy Kugelmass.

Happy fifth birthday, Sohara, our *zeeskeit maydeleh*. We love you with all our hearts. From Mommy, Daddy, Bubby & Tati.

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What's New deadlines: Monday, Feb. 2 is the deadline for the Feb. 12 issue and Monday, Feb. 9 is the deadline for the Feb. 19 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Friday, January 30

WHAT'S NEXT?

Temple Har Zion presents "President Obama, Israel and the Middle East" with **Doni Remba** of the Jewish Alliance for Change, and who worked for Israel's prime minister. Join Shabbat services, followed by talk and oneg Shabbat at 8:30 p.m. 905-889-2252

FAMILY ONEG SHABBAT

Oraynu Congregation For Humanistic Judaism hosts a potluck Jewish humour family oneg Shabbat presented by Oraynu children's school grade 3 and 4 classes at the Barbara Frum Library. 6:30 p.m. RSVP, roby@oraynu.org or 416-385-3910.

Saturday, Jan. 31

SAVE DARFUR

Join B'nai Brith Youth Organization teen's 12-hour "Genocide Aware-a-thon" tonight 8 p.m. through Sunday, 8 a.m. for an all night initiative of awareness, education and advocacy. RSVP, kgoodman@bbyo.org or 416-398-2004.

Sunday, Feb. 1

WOW INNER/OUTER BEAUTY

Join Chabad Markham Sisterhood for "WOW" and discover your inner and outer beauty with a tribute to **Rebbetzin Rivka Holtzberg**. "What Not to Wear" with a fashion stylist, make-up demo, and gourmet brunch. Brunch 10:30 a.m. Program 11 a.m. $30. Tickets, **Lindsay Danzinger**, 905-886-0420, ext. 227 or **Jo-Anne Herr**, 905-597-4108.

COLD NIGHTS, HOT FILMS

Kolel presents My Father, My Lord followed by a discussion about Jewish fundamentalists. 7 p.m. 1028 Queen St. W. $10 at the door. No pre-registration required.

Monday, Feb. 2

CLUB SIMCHA

Club Simcha, a drop-in group for adults with mental health challenges, meets Mondays, 12-2 p.m. at 4700 Bathurst St. 905-886-6520.

NOT OPTED OUT

Beth Tikvah Synagogue holds monthly meetings for family or friends of inter-dating, or inter-married couples who would like support or information. Anyone who would like to share experiences or help those in similar circumstances is welcome. Discussions are discreet, and confidential with a professional facilitator, **Andrea Litvack**. 8 p.m. Information, **Moe Horenfeldt** in confidence, 905-508-0135 or mhorenf@idirect.com.

Tuesday, Feb. 3

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY

Beth Tikvah Synagogue Tuesday afternoon movie series with **Larry Anklewicz** continues with the film Boyton Beach Club. 2 p.m. $5. 416-221-3433

ISRAELI CINEMA SERIES

Hebrew University, The Canadian Centre for Israel Activism, The Speakers Action group and Hillel of Greater Toronto present "Contemporary Israeli Cinema, Beyond the Conflict: Common Hopes and Dreams" tonight, Sweet Mud introduced by **Dr. Gillian Helfield**. 7:30 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre. Tickets, 416-485-8000.

KOLEL LECTURE

Join **Barrie Wilson** as he discusses his book How Jesus Became Christian, 8 p.m. at the BJCC Sherman Campus. $10. 416-636-1880, ext. 235

Wednesday, Feb. 4

WEEKLY PARSHA STUDY

The Lodzer Centre Congregation hosts free interactive weekly parshah study, Wednesdays, 7:30-8:30 p.m. 416-636-6665

Continued on page 23

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Continued from page 22

WRESTLING WITH GOD

Dr. James Diamond continues "Wrestling With God: The Challenge of the Holocaust," 8-9:30 p.m. through Feb. 25 at Or Chaim Yeshiva. Register, 416-877-2050 or www.mekorot.ca

Other news

BETH EMETH BABIES

Join ongoing play group with Jewish educational content, music and games and snacks. Bring 3-36- month-old child or grandchild. Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-noon. Register, 416-633-3838.

3 SUPPORT GROUPS

Circle of Care (416-635-2900) offers three new support groups. "A New Day," a closed 6-session group for abused women 55+ focusing on providing a safe space to learn and share. Begins Monday, Feb. 2, 10-11:30 a.m. Call **Marisa Di Nardo**, ext. 418. "Spousal Bereavement Support Group, 7 sessions for those 55+ discussing death, bereavement, living without your loved one and recreating the self, facilitated by a social worker. Begins Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2-3:30 p.m. Call **Janina Shuster,** ext. 483. "Adult Children Caregivers Support Group," an 8-week group for adult children caring for aging parents. Begins Monday, Feb. 9, 7:30-9 p.m. Call ext. 472.

PETERBOROUGH SHABBAT

Beth Israel Synagogue of Peterborough is holding a Jewish lifecycle weekend with **Rabbi Shalom Schachter**. Explore our Jewish heritage while celebrating life cycle events. Friday, Feb. 6, 6 p.m., Kaballat Shabbat service followed by discussion. Saturday, Feb. 7, 10 a.m., learning service including an *aufruf*, an *aliyah* of the bride and the groom, and a bat mitzvah followed by kiddush. Havdallah service at 7 p.m. followed by a shtetl wedding with klezmer music, dancing and noshe. All welcome, especially former Peterborough residents. 705-745-8398 or www.bethisraelsynagogue.ca

CHRISTIE BLATCHFORD

Beth Sholom Synagogue Book Club presents **Christie Blatchford** discussing her book Fifteen Days and a dessert reception. Thursday, Feb. 5, 7:30 p.m. $15, non-members $20. RSVP, 416-783-6103.

HIRSCH AND ORTHODOXY

Torah in Motion presents a conference on "**Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch** and the Development of Modern Orthodoxy" with **Rabbi Dr. Adam Ferziger** of Bar-Ilan University, **Dr. Rachel Heuberger** of University Library Frankfurt am Main, **Dr. Marc Shapiro** of University of Scranton, **Dr. Edward Breuer** of Hebrew University. Sunday, Feb. 8, 9:15 a.m.-3 p.m. at Congregation B'nai Torah. www.torahinmotion.org or 416-633-5770

TU B'SHVAT CELEBRATION

Women's League for Conservative Judaism International Northeast Region hosts a Tu B'Shvat celebration for sisterhood members, Sunday, Feb. 8, 9:30 a.m. at Shaar Shalom Synagogue. $7. R.S.V.P. by Jan. 30 to **Rose**, 905-764-8141.

HEBREW READING COURSE II

Beth Emeth Synagogue offers a free Hebrew reading course for those who can read Hebrew slowly and want practice reading, singing, and understanding prayers used during daily and Shabbat services. Six sessions, starting Thursday, Feb. 12, 8 p.m. Register, 416-633-3838.

LODZER DANCE

The Lodzer Centre Congregation hosts a dance with Go Freddy Go playing music of the 50s and 60s. Saturday, Feb. 14, 8 p.m. $25. 416-636-6665

LIMMUD RETURNS FEB. 15

Limmud Toronto, a festival of Jewish learning and culture takes place Sunday, Feb. 15 at the University of Toronto. Topics include Torah, liturgy, Jewish history, eco-Judaism, writing a family memoir, sing along with an instant choir, poetry, and more. Free programs for children ages 5-12. Register, www.limmud.ca or 647-838-7004.

JACS CONFERENCE

JACS hosts "Judaism and Recovery Hand in Hand," a conference where Jews in recovery, along with their family and friends, can join in a weekend of spiritual growth and awareness. The weekend will include ongoing meetings, workshops and speakers in a safe environment for Jews of all denominations. Feb. 27-March 1. Registration and info, 416-638-0350, ext. 221. or www.jacstoronto.org.

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child, 4600 Bathurst St. Information/registration 416-638-7800 or www.jfandcs.com. Call **Shawna** ext. 215 for info and registration.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 20

What's New

Effective Parenting. A four-session group to learn what parents can do to raise a happy, motivated and well behaved child. For parents of children ages 2-11 years. Topics include how to nurture self esteem, encourage problem solving, increase communication and setting limits. Begins Monday, Feb. 2, 7-9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

Parenting The Child With ADHD. A six-week group for parents who want to learn more about ADHD and develop strategies for assisting their children at home and at school. Begins Wednesday, Feb. 4, 6:30-8 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building. Call for pre-group interview.

The Challenge of Anger for Women. Six sessions for women to learn to express their anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way. Begins Wednesday, Feb. 4, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

Looking Ahead. Six-session group for newly separated or divorced individuals feeling loss, anger, loneliness and wanting to move forward. Begins Thursday, Feb. 5 7-9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

Living With Teens. A six-session group on parenting your adolescent without losing your cool including setting limits, open communication, the pressures of drugs, alcohol, dating and sexuality. Begins Thursday, Feb. 12, 7 to 9 p.m. at Stephen Lewis Secondary School.

One Family, Two Homes, a 3-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Children participate in separate age appropriate groups to discuss feeling better, dealing with myths and knowing where to get support. Thursdays, February 12-26, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

FOR SENIORS

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC hosts "The Economic Crisis: Financial Management in Retirement" with **Ellen Roseman**, Toronto Star financial columnist, Thursday, Jan. 29, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155 or phyllisf@mnjcc.org.

Beth Tzedec Congregation Haverim Program presents "The Great Synagogues of Europe" with **Corey Keeble**, from the Royal Ontario Museum. Monday, Feb. 2, 1:30 p.m. $3. 416-781-3511

Chai Shalom Society Beth Sholom Synagogue holds a Tu B'Shvat Seder lead by **Karen Goodis**, principal of Beth Sholom Hebrew School, Wednesday, Feb. 4, noon. $8. RSVP, **Rivy** at 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

Earl Bales Seniors Club In The Park. Sunday dance, Feb 22; Casino Rama, Wednesday, Feb. 11. Lunch and laughter, Wednesday, Feb. 4, noon, free, bring lunch and a drink. Movie Day, Thursday, Feb. 19, 1 p.m. Also bridge, maj jong, conversational Hebrew and more. All welcome. Call Tuesday.-Thursday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

"Life Lessons in Parshah," Mondays, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. $3, non-members $6.

"Canadian Jewish Writers," a 4-part series with **Adam Fuerstenberg**, Tuesdays, Feb 3-24, 10-11:30 a.m. $3, non members $6.

Concert by the Temple Emanu-el choir, Wednesday, Feb. 4, 7-8 p.m. Free.

"Lunch and Laughter Social Group," Tuesdays, 1 p.m. Info, **Susan Lanczi**, 905-771-8818.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Iris Hausssler: Honest Threads at the Koffler Gallery off-site, Honest Ed's, 581 Bloor St. W. second floor.

Support group for children of Holocaust survivors facilitated by **Rose Heilbronn**. Open to second generation, adult children and their families. Fee. 6 sessions begins Feb. 2. Info, 416-457-1315 or ext. 235.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

International Jewish cinema film talk with **Shlomo Schwartzberg**, "Oh Canada!" Sunday, Feb. 1, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.$9, includes a light breakfast. Register, ext. 0.

Kolel at the J, "New Jewish Feminism: Are We Done?" with **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein**. Thursday, Feb. 5, 8-9:30 p.m. Register, ext. 255 or kolel@bjcc.org.

Cooking With **Itka**: Moroccan Cuisine," Sunday, Feb. 8, 7-9:30 p.m. $18. Info, **Ilana Hirt**, jewishlife@mnjcc.org or ext. 154.

Habonim-Dror Club Gesher/Kesher meets Sunday, Feb. 1, 4-6 p.m. Info, **Eitan Grinspun**, 416-633-2511.

Deb Filler performs in Well, I'll Tell Ya...! Thurs. Jan. 29 and Jan. 31, 8 p.m. and Sun. Feb. 1, 3 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre. $25. Tickets, ext. 0 or www.mnjcc.org.

"Mystics, Medics, and Merchants" paintings by **Myriam Nafte** in the Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space through March 8. A portion of proceeds from the sale of work benefits the Downtown Jewish Community School.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Green, Henry	Jan. 12/09	36 Rondeau Dr
Pollak, Ibolya	Jan. 3/09	100 Raglan Ave
Kaplan, Doris	Jan. 7/09	Private
Ghalichi, Louise	Jan. 8/09	550 Cummer Ave
Szwimer, Dvora Dora	Jan. 8/09	23 Mountbatten Rd
Kuretzky, Anne	Jan. 9/09	29 Aldburn Ave
Maimon, Yehuda	Jan. 10/09	100 Canyon Ave
Katz, Mara	Jan. 10/09	1 Clark Ave. W
Lewis, Melvyn	Jan. 10/09	11 Abraham Ave
Baruch, Liebe Lutze	Jan. 11/09	Private
Shtern, Fira	Jan. 13/09	Private
Karry, Max	Jan. 13/09	
Levine, Harold Frederick	Jan. 12/09	
Silverman, Jack	Jan. 13/09	3560 Bathurst St
Fridenberg, Monty H.	Jan. 13/09	1121 Steeles Ave.W
Zlotnick, Sarah	Jan. 14/09	37 Lyonsgate Dr
Nobleman, Norma	Jan. 14/09	Private
Cabessa, Messody	Jan. 14/09	26 Rodeo Dr
Pelz, Faiga	Jan. 14/09	317 Joicey Blvd
Lapell, Charles Paul	Jan. 14/09	46 Gloucester Grove

HEBREW BASIC

Shirley Shelman	Jan 7/09	225 St. George Street
Sally Lewis	Jan 13/09	550 Cummer Avenue
Sima Zylbersztein	Jan 15/09	12 Goldfinch Court

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Esther Lieberman	Jan 11/09	24 Shortil Rd
Markus Cohen	Jan 11/09	90 Bedford Rd
Lottie Beldick	Jan 11/09	429 Walmer Rd
David le Nobel	Jan 11/09	660 Glen Cedar Cr
Evelyn Richie	Jan 13/09	4415 Bathurst St
Shirley Sussman	Jan 14/09	27 Strathearn Rd
Arlene Partnoy	Jan 13/09	82 Bedford Park Ave
Sally Grossman	Jan 13/09	3560 Bathurst St
Sarah Engle	Jan 13/09	224 Strathallan Wood
Stella Gordon	Jan 16/09	18 William Carson Cr
Jack Stopper	Jan 16/09	467 York Hill Blvd
Aron Kravchik	Jan 15/09	15 Brill Cr
Sybil Kayfitz	Jan 15/09	30 Apricot St
Arthur Freeman	Jan 15/09	47 Corwin Cres
Leonid Karpinsky	Jan 17/09	2104-10 Torresdale Ave
Betty Cobrin	Jan 16/09	550 Cummer Ave
The Hon. Sydney Harris	Jan 17/09	3303 Don Mills Rd

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Community Section

Etnah Strous ז"ל

Beloved mother and granny, passed away in South Africa, January 19, 2009. Will be sadly missed and always loved, by *Sharon, Mickey, Lori, Kim and Jonathan Wolfshout.*

Marsha Wright, daughter of

Faye Gold ז"ל

would like to thank our relatives and friends for their kind expressions of sympathy and donations on the passing of my dearly beloved mother.

Marsha Wright,
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Obituary

Sydney Harris 'exemplified Jewish honour'

By LEILA SPEISMAN
Staff Reporter

Sydney Harris, a retired Ontario Provincial Court judge, a former president of Canadian Jewish Congress and a fierce fighter for Jewish causes, human rights and civil liberties, died on Jan. 17 of kidney failure after a short illness. He was 91.

Harris was born in Toronto, the grandchild of immigrants who came to Toronto in the 1880s. He graduated from the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall Law School.

During the war, he worked as an administrative lawyer in Ottawa. Together with Harold Rubenstein, he founded the law firm of Harris & Rubenstein.

In 1976, Harris was appointed a judge of the Ontario Provincial Court, Criminal Division. Among his noteworthy decisions were his acquittal of the gay magazine Body Politic and three officers of Pink Triangle Press for possession and distribution of obscene materials in 1978 and his dismissal of charges, in 1983, against Magder Furs for selling goods on Sunday, at a time when Sunday shopping was illegal.

After his retirement in 1982, he served as a small claims court judge, a part-time member of the Ontario Assessment Review Board, a referee for the Law Society of Upper Canada and a lay appointee of Council for the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors.

Until the last few years, he remained active in Canadian Jewish Congress. Bernie Farber, chief executive officer of CJC, said that before becoming national president in 1974, Harris had served as chair of the CJC's community relations committee and chair of the Ontario region from 1968 to 1971.

Farber said that as a member of the CJC's national executive, Harris attended meetings wherever they were held. He always travelled to them by train, as he didn't like flying.

"He called me regularly, offering advice, with great wisdom and prescience," Farber said.

Together with Sid Midanik and Ben Kayfetz, he worked hard against the neo-Nazi threat, at a time when the Canadian Nazi Party was disturbingly active. "They hired a private investigator who infiltrated the Canadian Nazi Party, and his information led to its collapse," Farber said.

Farber praised Harris' dignity, calling him "a gentleman and a man who exemplified Jewish honour. The likes of people such as Sydney Harris come rarely in a lifetime. He will be sorely missed."

Harris was the regional chair of the Canadian Council of Reform Congregations, a founding member and president of Upper Canada Lodge, B'nai Brith, president of Toronto Jewish Vocational Service (now JVS), and Canadian Friends of Boys Town Jerusalem, serving as its president. He was active at Holy Blossom Temple – his family was among its founding members – and later Temple Sinai.

Harris worked as an advocate for amendments to the Criminal Code against hate literature and for the protection of shchitah. He opposed religious education in the public schools and capital punishment. During the 1950s and '60s, he was an active supporter of the campaign for civil rights in the United States.

He was devoted to his family, his son Mark said, calling him "a learned man, a devoted son, an inspiring father, grandfather and teacher, and a pure and loving husband."

Mark said his father's many activities included doing the New York Times crossword puzzles, drinking single malt Scotch, chess, gardening, travelling, spending time at the family cottage and leading family religious ceremonies such as Shabbat and Pesach seders.

Harris is survived by his wife of 59 years, Enid; his son Mark (and Mark's wife, Ricki) and his son David; grandchildren Lindsay and Brett, and his sister, Thelma Rose.

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Egypt urges Hamas to take truce deal before Israeli vote

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JERUSALEM — Officials in Egypt are attempting to persuade Hamas to accept Israel's current offer of a truce in Gaza before a far less accommodating government is in place if Likud chair Benjamin Netanyahu is elected, the pan-Arab daily Asharq Al-Awsat reported Monday.

The newspaper quoted the officials as telling Hamas that surveys in Israel show the opposition leader is likely to come to power in the Feb. 10 general election.

Hamas' Gaza spokesman Ayman Taha, meanwhile, said recently that Israel has offered his Palestinian Islamist group a 10-year ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. Egypt is also demanding a truce of several years' duration. But Taha said the group would agree to a ceasefire of no more than between one year and 18 months.

Middle East envoy, former British prime minister Tony Blair, is seen at a meeting with Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem.
[Lior Mizrahi/Flash90 photo]

Another Hamas spokesman, Ismail Radwan, said a long-term ceasefire "kills" the Palestinians' right to resistance.

Also on Monday, the London-based newspaper Al-Hayat reported that Israel has offered Hamas a ceasefire for an unlimited amount of time and the opening of Gaza's borders in return for abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit.

According to the report, Hamas rejected the offer on the grounds that it linked the opening of the border crossings to Schalit's release.

Schalit was kidnapped by Gaza militants in a 2006 cross-border raid. He is believed to be still held in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas and Israeli officials have also indicated that much of the discussion has centred on control of the border crossings in and out of Gaza. Hamas wants the blockade on Gaza lifted. Israel wants assurances that Hamas will stop smuggling weapons into the Gaza Strip.

"Hamas listened to the Israeli proposal presented by [Defence Ministry official] Amos Gilad, and with it a proposal for a ceasefire for a year and a half, but Hamas presented a counter-proposal of one year only," Taha told reporters in Cairo after talks with Egyptian intelligence officials.

The Hamas delegation met Sunday with the heads of Egyptian intelligence, who informed them of Israel's positions. Jerusalem has not yet clarified what stance it had presented.

Meanwhile, Taha reiterated the group's call for a lifting of the blockade imposed on the impoverished and devastated Gaza Strip by Israel and Egypt as a condition for the truce. "[Hamas] called for a complete lifting of the blockade and an opening of all the crossings," Taha said.

Hamas proposed to Egyptian mediators that European and Turkish monitors should be present at the border crossings, but rejected the presence of Israeli monitors, saying Israeli monitoring is "a large part of the problem," Taha said.

Asked if Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah forces would be present at the crossings, Taha said: "Hamas is the existing government in Gaza."

Commenting on the talks, Osama Hamdan, Hamas' representative in Lebanon, told Al Jazeera satellite television on Sunday that Hamas is unwilling to alter its positions for Israel's benefit.

"The Israelis must understand that they will not achieve through politics what they failed to do militarily," Hamdan said.

Hamdan also said Sunday that Fatah must end peace negotiations with Israel before any reconciliation talks can take place.

The remarks were bound to complicate Arab efforts to reconcile Hamas, which controls Gaza, and the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank.

Speaking at a rally in Beirut Sunday, Hamdan – a close ally of Hamas political leader Khaled Meshal – said that the group welcomes Palestinian dialogue, but that any reconciliation should be based on a program to liberate territory and regain rights.

He also demanded that the PA end security co-ordination with Israel, and maintained that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process had ended.

"Those who committed mistakes must correct their mistakes through a clear and frank declaration to stop security co-ordination with the [Israeli] occupation, release [Hamas] prisoners and later end negotiations [with Israel] because the peace process is irreversibly over," said Hamdan.

"It's time for us to talk about a reconciliation based on a resistance program to liberate the [occupied] territory and regain rights," he added.

Asharq Al-Awsat also reported Saturday that Hamas had suggested that representatives of the Palestinian Authority should be stationed at the Rafah crossing from Gaza to Egypt, but that they should be residents of Gaza, not the West Bank.

Israel has been allowing some supply convoys into Gaza, though its borders remain largely closed. The Israel Defence Forces says more than 125 trucks a day – on some days, nearly 200 – have entered Gaza since fighting ended on Jan. 17, but aid workers say the numbers are not enough.

Hamas forced civilians to be human shields: report

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Palestinian civilians have accused Hamas of forcing them to stay in homes from which gunmen shot at Israeli soldiers during recent hostilities in Gaza, the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera reported last week.

More than 1,250 Palestinians were reportedly killed during Israel's offensive against Hamas in the coastal territory. According to estimates by Gaza officials, more than half of the Palestinian dead were civilians.

But the Italian paper quoted a doctor at Gaza City's Shifa Hospital as saying that it's "possible that the death toll in Gaza was 500 or 600 at the most, mostly youths aged 17 to 23 who were enlisted by Hamas – who sent them to their deaths."

Thirteen Israelis were also killed during the three-week operation, which was aimed at halting rocket fire on southern Israel and destroying Hamas infrastructure.

Israel was heavily criticized for the large number of Palestinian civilians killed in the campaign.

The Gaza doctor was further quoted as saying: "Perhaps it is like Jenin in 2002. At the beginning they spoke about 1,500 dead, and at the end it turned out to be only 54 – of whom 45 were militants."

Envoy pick draws early praise

By ERIC FINGERHUT
JTA

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Barack Obama's selection for Middle East envoy drew praise from Israel, as well as dovish groups and at least one centrist Jewish organization.

George Mitchell was introduced as the new special envoy for Middle East peace at a State Department news conference last Thursday afternoon.

Mitchell said he believes deeply that "committed, persevering and patient diplomacy" can bring about peace in the Middle East and "demands our maximum effort, no matter the difficulties, no matter the setbacks."

"It will be the policy of my administration to actively and aggressively seek a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians, as well as Israel and its Arab neighbours," Obama said at the news conference.

The president said he would be sending Mitchell to the region as "soon as possible to help the parties ensure that the [Gaza] ceasefire that has been achieved is made durable and sustainable."

Obama reiterated his statement during last year's presidential campaign that Israel was justified in responding to Hamas rocket attacks on southern Israel.

"Let me be clear: America is committed to Israel's security and we will always support Israel's right to defend itself against legitimate threats," he said.

"For years, Hamas has launched thousands of rockets at innocent Israeli citizens. No democracy can tolerate such danger to its people, nor should the international community, and neither should the Palestinian people themselves, whose interests are only set back by acts of terror.

Obama added that "just as the terror of rocket fire aimed at innocent Israelis is intolerable, so too is a future without hope for the Palestinians." He called for the openings of Gaza's border crossings with an "appropriate monitoring regime" as part of a lasting ceasefire.

The president also said that the Arab peace initiative – which calls for peace with Israel if it withdraws to pre-1967 borders – "contains constructive elements that could help advance these efforts" and called on Arab states to "act on the initiative's promise" by supporting the Palestinian Authority government, taking steps toward normalizing relations with Israel and standing up to "extremism that threatens us all."

Israel welcomed Mitchell's appointment. Its U.S. ambassador, Sallai Meridor, congratulated Mitchell in a statement and said Israel holds him "in high regard and looks forward to working with him on taking the next steps towards realizing a future of peace and security for Israel and her neighbours."

Rise in attacks renews fears among French Jews

By DEVORAH LAUTER
JTA

PARIS — The spike of anti-Semitic attacks across Europe during Israel's three-week war in Gaza has struck a raw nerve here, reviving fears among French Jews that the violence of the second intifadah years has returned to their country.

During the intifadah earlier in the decade, a sustained surge in attacks against French Jews and the government's perceived lacklustre response prompted many Jews to fear for their future in France, with some leaving the country.

The government's belated crackdown on the violence and the election in May 2007 of a new president, Nicolas Sarkozy, with warm ties to Israel and the Jewish community allayed the fears of many and helped tamper anti-Semitic attacks.

But the attacks returned this month with the latest conflagration in the Middle East, enraging French Muslims and resulting in near-daily assaults against Jews for the duration of the Gaza war.

"They are more worried about their safety. They are more afraid than before," said Rabbi Mendel Belinow, leader of a Chabad Lubavitch synagogue and outreach centre in the northern Paris suburb of Saint-Denis that was firebombed Jan. 11.

Two of the nine Molotov cocktails thrown at his synagogue ignited, burning part of the centre's cafeteria. No injuries were reported, though the rabbi was in the building at the time and was believed to have been a target.

The synagogue, located in a heavily immigrant suburb known for its high crime and poverty rates, also was attacked in 2005, when "Death to the Jews" was scrawled on its inner walls.

Over the past few weeks, the Jewish community has seen attacks ranging from firebombings to stabbings. The government's inability to protect them from violence, despite the efforts of French authorities, has generated a renewed sense of unease in the French Jewish community, which numbers roughly 600,000 in a country of 60 million. France has five million to six million Muslims.

"It's harder to reassure them now," Belinow said of his approximately 160 congregants.

While the current ceasefire between Israel and Hamas is expected to diminish anti-Jewish violence, pro-Palestinian groups have promised to continue with their anti-Israel protests. Such demonstrations in France, which have drawn tens of thousands, commonly have ended in riots and are a mouthpiece for virulent anti-Zionism, including the burning of Israeli flags. Jews and synagogues have been attacked during and following protests by a fringe of violent youths.

Jewish community leaders warn that fears of further attack will disrupt the daily routines of Jews and intimidate them into hiding their religious identity – and if the volatile situation is not controlled, to flee the country.

Oren Toledano, the director of the Paris-based aliyah department for the Jewish Agency for Israel, said that in the past three weeks, his phone has begun ringing off the hook again, with many French Jews considering aliyah calling to accelerate the process.

As the government fine-tunes its security measures, community dialogue activists say the Gaza war destroyed years of efforts to prevent a repetition of the violent reaction in France to the second intifadah.

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite our readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes. Stories should not exceed 2,000 words.

We must receive your submissions no later than Friday, March 12. E-mail submissions are preferred, but works can also be sent by mail or brought to our office.
E-mail: **info@ cjnews.com.** Mail: 1500 Don Mills Rd., Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4.
Submissions will *not* be returned. Only writers whose work is chosen for publication will be contacted.

CJN Purim Art Contest

It's time again for our annual **Purim Art Contest.**

Who can enter: Children in grades 1 to 6 inclusive are eligible. The children of *CJN* employees are not eligible.

Prizes: The judges will choose one drawing from two different students in each grade. These "winning" drawings will be published in *The CJN*'s 2009 Purim Poster. In addition, each of the 12 children whose drawings have been selected will receive a cheque for $25.

How to enter: You may submit as many drawings as you want. However, they should not be too small nor too large. Please paint or draw bright, bold, colourful pictures. You may use markers, crayons, paint or pencils. Please send us your name, address, phone number, age and grade along with your drawings.

You may mail or deliver your drawings to: CJN Community Contests, The Canadian Jewish News, 1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4. If you want us to return the pictures to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, we will be unable to do so.

The contest closes at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2009. We will undoubtedly receive many wonderful submissions from children all across the country. But only 12 of the drawings will be chosen as the "winners." The judges will base their decisions on a number of factors such as: the use of colour, the imaginative quality of the drawing and the way it tells an aspect of the story of Purim. The judges' decisions will be final. The chances of winning depend upon the number and quality of submissions received.

How the winner will be announced: The children whose pictures are chosen will be notified by telephone before the start of Shabbat on Friday, February 20, 2009.

When the prizes will be awarded: The "winning" pictures will be published in *The CJN* of March 5, 2009. Have fun and good luck.

Any litigation respecting the conduct and awarding of a prize in this contest may be submitted to the Régie des Loteries et courses du Québec.

SIGN OF THE TIMES

With Israelis heading to the polls Feb. 10, elections signs and ads dot the landscape. Here, a passerby seems almost indifferent to a Labor party billboard depicting the three main contenders for prime minister: Kadima leader Tzipi Livni, Labor chief Ehud Barak, centre, and Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu. The tagline reads, "At the moment of truth, Barak."

[Israel Sun photo]

Cambridge students stage sit-in over Gaza

JTA

LONDON — Up to 100 students are staging a sit-in at Cambridge University over Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip.

The students have refused to leave the law faculty building since Friday in an action that follows similar "occupations" at more than a dozen British universities.

The Cambridge Gaza Solidarity group on Sunday issued a list of demands to the university's authorities, including issuing a statement condemning Israel's military action in Gaza, divestment from firms supplying arms to Israel, at least 10 scholarships for students from Gaza and shipment of "surplus" computers to universities in Gaza. The students say they will remain in the building until their demands are met.

Over the past week, students at other British universities have staged sit-ins that have lasted nearly a week, such as at the London School of Economics, or ended peacefully after a few hours, as at Oxford University.

None of the universities has issued a statement condemning Israel's military action or committed to divesting from companies trading arms with Israel. Neither has any agreed to cancel lectures by Israelis or to any other form of academic boycott.

Rather than responding to the demand for condemnation statements, university heads have expressed their support for a statement issued last week by Universities U.K., their representative body. The statement calls for "an end to the conflict in and beyond Gaza," and adds, "We are particularly aware that many of the civilian casualties have occurred in educational establishments."

The statement concludes: "Higher education, in particular, is a global activity and we value our academic links with universities all over the world. The international nature of higher education means it is a force for understanding, tolerance and respect between peoples."

The number of protesting students has been small – a few hundred combined at all the universities. At Oxford, for example, approximately 80 students took part in a sit-in in the library building out of more than 12,000 students that attend the school.

Israel Briefs

Waltz with Oscar?

Waltz With Bashir was nominated for an Academy Award for best foreign film in nominations announced Jan. 22. The awards will be presented Feb. 22.

Waltz with Bashir, an animated documentary by and about director Ari Folman as a traumatized veteran trying to recover his memories of the first Lebanon War, earned a Golden Globe for best foreign language film and won best picture from the National Society of Film Critics. It also won an Ophir Award, Israel's equivalent of an Oscar, for best film. An Israeli film has never won best foreign film.

Death count questioned

Israeli officials denied a report in an Italian newspaper that said the number of Gazans killed in the recent Gaza operation wasn't more than 500 to 600. The Israel Defence Forces is sticking to its original estimates that some 1,300 Palestinians died in the three-week operation, and that at least two-thirds were terrorists. At least 500 are said to be members of Hamas' military wing. The report in Corriere della sera said the number of wounded was also far less than the 5,000 Hamas claims. Most Hamas gunmen dressed as civilians, which has contributed to high estimates of civilian casualties.

Permanent truce sought

The United Nations Security Council called Jan. 21 for a permanent truce in Gaza. It also called for guarantees to prevent arms smuggling into Gaza and for the permanent reopening of border crossings. Britain and France drafted the statement. It was approved by all 15 council members. The council called for humanitarian aid to be delivered to civilians without problems.

Water pumping halted

Israel has halted pumping water from the Sea of Galilee, the state's main water source. It stopped Jan. 19 when the water level reached 16 inches from the "black line," beyond which pumping is prohibited. Water is instead being pumped from underground aquifers, which are also dangerously low. Rainfall in Israel this year has been about half its annual average, and January 2009 is on track to be the driest month on record, Ha'aretz reported. Water sources that flow into the Sea of Galilee are also at the lowest levels ever. Israel is in the fifth consecutive year of drought.

Arab parties can run

Israel's Supreme Court ruled that two Arab parties shouldn't be disqualified from national elections. The court overturned the decision of Israel's Central Elections Committee to ban the Balad and United Arab List-Ta'al parties from the Feb. 10 elections. The nine justices on the court's panel decided unanimously in the case of the United Arab List-Ta'al party and by a majority for Balad. The elections panel had disqualified the parties based on petitions claiming they don't recognize Israel as the Jewish homeland and call for armed conflict against Israel. A 500-page appeal was filed Jan. 19.

Natural gas find disputed

Lebanon says a huge pocket of natural gas found off the coast of Haifa may be in its territorial waters. The find was announced Jan. 18 by the U.S.-based Noble Energy Inc., which has been drilling at the site in co-operation with Israeli partners for five years. Beirut imports most of its natural gas from Egypt. The more than three trillion cubic feet of reserves could serve Israel's needs for 15 years and lessen its dependence on outside sources.

Boycotts hurt growers

Israeli fruit growers say boycotts against produce have hurt the industry. Farmers told Ynet that a lot of produce is rotting in warehouses due to boycotts against Israeli produce in countries such as Jordan and Britain, and Scandinavian countries Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Though some boycotts against goods made in the West Bank have been in place previously, the produce boycott appears to be a direct result of Israel's military operation in Gaza.

– with files from JTA

CLIC database has over 1,000 names

Continued from page 1

Earlier in the month, Ryan provoked the ire of the Jewish community by comparing Israel to Nazi Germany for its recent actions in Gaza. He later apologized for the remark.

Ross said CLIC volunteers are also working on creating a website, as well as a Facebook site that he hoped would be ready this week.

According to Ross, as of last week, CLIC's private e-mail database had more than 1,000 names, but he expected that number to grow exponentially through word of mouth when the website is functional.

"We're not a charity. We're not asking for money. It's a private initiative… [but] public opinion is now mostly anti-Israel, and the [Palestinians] are winning the war in that," Ross said.

He added that he and Gissin agreed that CLIC "was our chance to have an effect on Canadians' opinions, where they can make a difference in their own backyard."

Ross added that CLIC alerts will not be limited to just "negative" press about Israel, but will also feature positive articles about the country.

"A positive article is equally important as a negative one," Ross said. "Because if a reader sees it… they get a different perspective of Israel."

CLIC
CANADIAN LIGHT ON ISRAEL COVERAGE

He said CLIC will continue for the foreseeable future.

"There are so many wonderful achievements that happen in Israel that affect Canada and the world that when people start being made aware of that, then we're [perceived as] not just another bunch of yahoos in the Middle East," Ross said.

Gissin told The CJN that projects such as CLIC are of paramount importance for Israel, as the country now must fight on a second front.

"The war for Israel's image is no less severe than the ground war," he said. "All of us need to get more involved in this arena, which is becoming more important every day."

Gissin said he continues to believe that most reports from the conflict that ran in Canadian media had been fair in pointing to Hamas as being responsible for much of the suffering in Gaza while still identifying Israel's right of self defence throughout the military campaign.

"But now that the war is over, we see attempts by some papers and writers to ignore the reasons for Israel's military operation… focusing only on the difficult pictures coming from Gaza [while ignoring] Hamas' culpability," he said.

"Hamas has created a hostage situation in Gaza where 1.5 million civilians have to pay the price for its terrorist links and aggression."

Italian students board train to Auschwitz

JTA

FLORENCE, Italy — More than 800 Italian high school students left Florence by special train for Auschwitz.

The annual Memory Train trip, which left Sunday, is part of numerous events Tuesday in Italy marking Holocaust Memorial Day.

Accompanied by Holocaust survivors and local officials, the students will visit the former Nazi death camp in Poland and also Jewish sites in Krakow.

"The risks of xenophobia, of hatred, of racism, of anti-Semitism are still dramatically present," Tuscany's governor, Claudio Martini, told the students at the train station.

Other government officials, meanwhile, took part Sunday in a solidarity meeting at the Florence synagogue following the discovery last week of a rudimentary explosive device placed near the synagogue, apparently in protest against the situation in the Gaza Strip.

"We want to embrace the Jewish community at a moment in which their symbols are the object of intimidation and heavy attacks," Martini told the students.

JNF
JEWISH NATIONAL FUND OF CANADA

JNF Toronto's 60th Anniversary Annual Negev Dinner featured participation by students from United Synagogue Day School.

USDS students taking part in the march-past of the flags of JNF, Israel, Ontario and Canada.

The USDS choir assembled to perform at the Negev Dinner. School liaison with JNF for student involvement in the Dinner from USDS was Amiel Sabari, Director of Jewish Studies.

And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

If I were prime minister...

By RITA POLIAKOV
Special to The CJN

Daniel Caplan has never really been involved in politics. He plays clarinet and drums, is a member of his university's fraternity and lost the student council elections in high school.

But that didn't stop the 21-year-old student from applying to the CBC television show, Canada's Next Great Prime Minister.

"I've always been interested in politics, but I've never been involved. I've done a little bit of school politics... when I was in elementary school, I was the [student council] treasurer," said Caplan, a fourth-year student at York's Schulich School of Business.

"Coming from a business background, I never had an opportunity to get involved in something political."

Caplan's opportunity came a few months ago when he heard about the competition run by the CBC.

"It sounded right up my alley," he said.

The concept for the show came from a 1995 essay contest. Since 2006, it's been a nationally televised competition, and an opportunity for young Canadians to prove their political savvy.

Caplan is one of more than 100 Canadians aged 18 to 25 who competed for four spaces on the show. Each competitor submitted an entry video, responded to three questions online and organized a community event.

Ten Canadians have been chosen to participate in a political boot camp, and four will appear on the show on March 18. The final four will participate in a debate-style competition on the program, and the audience will decide the winner.

Caplan, right, and his friend Paul Jarvey, show their Canadian pride at Prague's Canadian embassy.

Jeopardy host and Canadian Alex Trebek will host the show, and four former Canadian prime ministers – Paul Martin, Brian Mulroney, Kim Campbell and Joe Clark – will act as the judges.

The show's winner will receive $50,000 and a paid internship sponsored by Magna International, the Dominion Institute and the Canada-U.S. Fulbright Program. Second-, third- and fourth-place winners will also receive an internship and a cash prize.

Although Caplan didn't make the cut, he shared his ideas about what he would do if he was ever in a position of political power.

"I guess I think I have some creative solutions that I could apply to problems facing Canadians. There's been a lack of leadership in Canada," he said.

Daniel Caplan, right, poses with former Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell, centre, and a friend, Chris Mitchelmore at the Canadian embassy in Prague.

In a video, which received almost 500 views on YouTube, Caplan concentrated on the economy, the environment and Canadian culture. As a business student, he believes that Canada is overly dependent on American trade, which, he said, contributed to the country's current economic situation. Instead of bailing out an ailing auto industry, he believes that the government should invest in an industry with the potential to succeed, such as Canada's forestry industry.

Caplan went on to mention the importance of preserving the environment.

"If we truly believe in reducing our carbon footprint, we need to stop talking about it and start acting on it," he said in the video. Caplan agrees with the Liberal party's idea to raise gas taxes. If he is ever elected to office, he would invest this money into improving Canada's transportation system.

While Caplan said his business background would have helped him understand Canada's economic situation, he also believes that the country needs to unite socially.

And the best way to do that, according to Caplan, is through the arts.

"I think art is something that really can bond this country together. What Canada is lacking is a sense of collectiveness. Art is one of those things that can go beyond those boundaries and bring diverse groups together," said Caplan, who is currently in a band.

As part of the requirements for the show, each applicant was asked to organize a community action event.

Last month, Caplan organized a one-night art show and sale called Urban Expressions of Life at the Propeller Centre for the Visual Arts.

The artists involved were from SKETCH, a Toronto-based art studio for homeless youths.

SKETCH offers a space, located on King Street, for homeless young people between 15 and 29, to build on their artistic skills through instructional workshops.

The art they create is exhibited and sold throughout the city. Caplan's event raised about $200, which was donated to SKETCH.

"The SKETCH thing – that was able to show that art [can] tackle homelessness more effectively than government programs are doing right now," Caplan said.

"It applies to drug use and poverty. Art reflects that. If you have less fortunate people [creating art] you get a perspective into their world," he said, adding that SKETCH's ultimate goal is to help youths get off the street.

Apart from his enthusiasm for Canadian art, Caplan also sees his Jewish background as a political strength. He attended Hebrew school as a child, he is involved in Hillel at York and is a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi, a Jewish fraternity.

"I think that a lot of Jewish people... are somewhat skeptical of Canadian leadership. They're afraid that their voices won't be heard," he said.

Caplan believes that having a Jewish prime minister could give Canada's Jewish population more of a voice, but he also understands the importance of balance.

"I think you're always Jewish, but as a prime minister, you have to put the Canadian interests first," he said.

Although Caplan didn't make the top 10, he said he would still like to continue his involvement in politics.

Hollywood's love affair with Revolutionary Road

By NORMAN RAVVIN
Special to The CJN

The position of Richard Yates' novel Revolutionary Road (Vintage) as one of Hollywood's fascinations this season reflects the American moment.

Norman Ravvin

Yates' postwar vision of American suburban life transfers well to Sam Mendes' film version starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet.

The novel's portrait of a young New York couple, newly moved to the outlying suburbs, is packed with crisp period detail. The ice-cream coloured cars, the under-populated green expanses of new residential developments, the particularity of mid-1950s clothing and homes all lend themselves to the kind of recreation that filmmakers and actors love to attempt.

But another aspect of the novel – its corrosive portrait of young people whose work, child-rearing and half-baked philosophies make them miserable – seems apt for a moment when Americans doubt their past leadership, their global influence and their economic future.

RICHARD YATES REVOLUTIONARY ROAD

Frank and April Wheeler, whose frustration and emptiness are at the core of Yates' vision, are anything but romantic as they struggle over deep differences in their views of the future. Frank despises his daily grind in New York City at an early computer industry behemoth that is a lightly satirized portrait of IBM. April imagines their lives as saveable, only if they follow their youthful ideals to a new life in Paris.

In the background, as they struggle toward a disastrous outcome, is April's unwillingness to bear their third child and her temptation to perform an abortion in secret, without telling her husband of her plans.

Aspects of Revolutionary Road will remind readers of other major American novels. The portrait of postwar New York is reminiscent of Saul Bellow's early work, and the satiric view of an office existence in Manhattan's skyscrapers is a genre all its own, beginning with F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby and carrying on through such contemporary takes on this theme as Jay McInerney's Bright Lights, Big City.

Frank Wheeler's pre-suburban existence, in a rough walk-up in Greenwich Village, is a chapter out of Beat America, as it was portrayed by Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg.

Though Revolutionary Road brought Yates critical and popular acclaim, in recent years it remained a cult book, a kind of underground classic, until its revival for the purposes of Hollywood (press materials for the recent film suggest that it was the single-minded efforts of actress Winslet that brought the book to the screen).

Yates' career foundered after Revolutionary Road. His next books received critical acclaim, but their author dissipated himself in alcoholic bouts, teaching creative writing in far-flung American universities in Iowa and Kansas. There is a dark romance in such writerly decline, and Yates' new popularity seems to be based, in part, on the myth of a failed creative genius.

Revolutionary Road is itself cinematic. It is full of wonderful set pieces in cars, in living rooms, in light-dappled kitchens. Frank and April go about their business with drama and manic energy, but the overall effect of Yates' vision is a sense of postwar emptiness and waste.

Leonardo DiCaprio with Kate Winslet in the film version of Revolutionary Road.

Norman Ravvin is chair of Concordia University's Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies. His books include the novel Lola by Night and the story collection Sex, Skyscrapers and Standard Yiddish.

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Neshama Carlebach shares her father's musical legacy

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Neshama Carlebach wants to share her late father's musical legacy with the world.

The 33-year-old chanteuse, who was born in New York City and raised in Toronto, performs about 100 concerts per year in a quest to popularize Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach's religious-themed music.

On Feb. 8, she will return to Toronto to regale an audience at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. The concert, "Remembering Shlomo", is in reference to her father who died suddenly in 1994 at the age of 69.

Carlebach performs his songs, which are inspired by prayers and passages from the Torah. "He said he wrote 5,000 songs, but it was probably more," she said by telephone from her home in New York City.

An Orthodox rabbi, composer and singer, Rabbi Carlebach had a dedicated fan base, and now his protege is following in his footsteps.

"One of my dreams was to share his music with the whole world," she said. "It's magical and uplifting, and in this broken world, we need magic, inspiration and tikkun olam.

"My dad's songs brought people together," she added. "He was Orthodox but very open to the world and non-judgmental."

Carlebach, who left Toronto a decade ago to pursue her career, has been in the entertainment business since the age of five. "I took acting and singing lessons. All I wanted was to perform, and he encouraged me."

She began singing with him when she was a teen, and at the age of 19, she accompanied him on an extensive concert tour.

"I learned everything from my father. He taught me how to connect with an audience. He could connect on a very deep level and that made him an incredible rabbi and a moving performer. I don't pretend to have that gift, but I strive for it.

"He also taught me the importance of silence, to appreciate the moments between music."

Neshama Carlebach

Carlebach, who turned professional shortly after her father's untimely death, usually performs at Jewish venues ranging from synagogues to community centres.

Apart from concerts in North America, she has toured a host of countries from Israel, Poland and Ukraine to Holland, Britain and South Africa.

She last visited Toronto in May 2008. She has also appeared in Winnipeg, Vancouver, Edmonton and Saskatoon.

"The travelling doesn't bother me, though it's not easy to pick up and leave," said Carlebach, who toured with her son Rafael, until he was 19 months old.

"I love the opportunity to connect with new audiences. But when Rafael became too active, it was too hard shlepping him along on these trips."

As she spoke, Rafael, now two, could be heard wailing in the background. "Come to mama," she said tenderly.

Carlebach's husband, Steven Katchen, a restaurant manager, used to accompany her on concert trips as well.

Since 1996, she has made six CDs – Soul, Ha Neshama shel Shlomo, Dancing with my Soul, Ani Shelach, Journey, and most, recently, One and One.

She is in the midst of finishing her seventh CD for Sojourn Records, recording her father's songs with an African-American gospel choir from a Baptist church in New York City.

Carlebach, who sings in English and Hebrew, has worked with that choir for the past four years. She was introduced to them by Rabbi Avi Weiss, who is her own rabbi and was close to her father.

Carlebach considered her father her best friend and misses him dearly. "But he never really left me," she mused.

Today, she is the only entertainer in her family. Carlebach's mother, Neila, is a teacher, while her sister, Nedara, is a homemaker who made aliyah.

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Arts & Travel

Travel Talk

By Bill Gladstone

SCRAPBOOKS HIGHLIGHT MOLLY PICON'S GLOWING CAREER IN THE YIDDISH THEATRE

A highly personal account of Yiddish theatre in the 20th century will be on view during the first exhibition of the scrapbooks of legendary performer Molly Picon and her spouse and collaborator Yonkel (Jacob) Kalich.

The American Jewish Historical Society presents "Pages from a Performing Life: The Scrapbooks of Molly Picon," starting Jan. 26 in the Center for Jewish History, Lower Manhattan.

Molly Picon in The Jolly Orphan. *[Courtesy American Jewish Historical Society]*

Born Margaret Pyekoon on the Lower East Side in 1898, Picon started performing in the Yiddish theatres of New York's Second Avenue, later moving to Broadway and Hollywood. With appearances in such shows as Yonkele, Shmendrik and Mamele, she delighted audiences around the globe and became known as "the darling of Second Avenue." She may be best known for her 1971 role as Yente the Matchmaker in Norman Jewison's film version of Fiddler on the Roof.

From 1919 to 1967, Molly and Yonkel kept 22 scrapbooks of clippings, reviews, interviews, fan letters, programs, telegrams and other ephemera. These personal documents serve as the centrepiece for the exhibition, which also includes posters, photographs, scripts and correspondence from the American Jewish Historical Society collection and the YIVO Institute. The Center for Jewish History is at 15 W. 16th St., New York.

* * *

Explore Jewish Ukraine: The Canadian Friends of the Ukrainian Jewish Community is hosting its inaugural mission to Ukraine. The itinerary includes visits to Jewish historical sites in Kiev, Uman and Odessa, showing among other things how Chassidism was born, how Yiddish culture thrived and how Zionism began.

Stops include the grave of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov and Babi Yar, the infamous ravine where 30,000 Jews were murdered. Travel dates are April 19 to 26, with an option of continuing to Israel for Yom Ha'atzmaut. For more information, visit the website www.cfujc.org or contact Marra Messinger at mmessinger@cfujc.org or 888-956-0003.

* * *

Jewish Routes to Poland: K. Walsh & Associates Travel is hosting Jewish Routes to Jewish Roots, a 15-day exploration of the rich cultural heritage of Jews in Poland, once home to the largest Jewish population in Europe. The itinerary includes visits to Warsaw, Lodz, Piotrkow Trybunalski, Wroclaw, Auschwitz, Krakow, Lancut, Lvov, Zamosc, Lublin, Majdanek and Kazimierz Dolny. Travel dates are May 31 to June 14. Contact Brian Stein, brian@kwtravel.com or 416-929-5964, ext. 225.

* * *

Kosher Cruise to Israel & Egypt: Lasko Kosher Cruises, which recently merged with kosher cruise operator Suite Life, has added a glatt kosher cruise to Israel and Egypt to its list of 2009 sailings. The Ancient Empires cruise includes 13 days aboard Celebrity Cruises' new Equinox, which leaves from Rome on Aug. 18. Ports of call include Naples, Athens, Rhodes, Ephesus, Alexandria, Haifa and Ashdod. Levi Teitlebaum, director of the Ottawa Vaad HaKashrus (OVH), is one of two rabbis supplying kosher supervision. 866-604-9838, www.koshercruises.com

* * *

Travel Briefs

• An exhibition at Ottawa's Canadian War Museum looks at the devastating impact of war on both military personnel and civilians. "A Letter from Japan: The Photographs of John Swope" features more than 100 images taken in Japan by a noted American photographer at the end of World War II. Accompanying this exhibition is a display of archival, documentary and photographic material related to Canadian prisoners of war in the Pacific. On view until March 29. (See the Museum's online exhibition, Canada and the First World War, at www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar).

•Swayed by a dramatic increase of Russian tourists to Israel, Sun Dream, a Moscow municipally owned company, has started to build a $100-million (US) luxury resort at Ein Bokek, on the shores of the Dead Sea. When completed later this year, the hotel's 240 guest rooms and suites will increase the number of guest rooms around the Dead Sea to about 4,300.

• Israel's Ministry of Tourism reports that 2008 was Israel's best year for tourism since the state's founding in 1948. "This is the first time ever more than three million tourists came to Israel in a single year," says Oded Grofman of the Israel Government Tourist Office in Canada.

Approximately 65,000 Canadians visited Israel from January to November in 2008, a 21 per cent increase over the same period the year before. For information on travel to Israel, please visit www.goisrael.ca.

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TORONTO STAR

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Toronto-born comedian steps out of his comfort zone

By RITA POLIAKOV
Special to The CJN

Dylan Mandlsohn's standup career started in a high school auditorium.

"When I was 17 years old, I did a show in high school, and it was the best feeling I've ever had in my life," he said.

Mandlsohn has been doing standup comedy for 11 years. He's performed at the Just for Laughs international comedy festival and the Boston comedy festival, has starred in his own Comedy Now special and continues to tour Canada and America.

Mandlsohn was always a class clown. Comedy, for the 28-year-old, wasn't just about getting laughs, it was about acceptance.

"Being funny was a great way to become accepted in high school. As long as I was the funny guy, I was accepted. No one really asked who I was, what my story was, it was, 'Hey, Dylan, do the impression of Arnold Schwarzenegger,'" he said.

"It was just easier to make people laugh, it keeps them at arm's length... it was just a way to make friends and not show all the sides. If I was sad, I could mask that."

When Mandlsohn was 18, he participated in a Yuk Yuk comedy club's new talent night.

"They liked me, they invited me back, and then it snowballed into working for Yuk Yuk's."

While the comedian attended the University of Windsor for drama, most of his university years were spent on the road, going from comedy club to comedy club.

"I was a straight C student. I was writing essays on hotel scratch pads," he said.

At 22, Mandlsohn decided to take some time off from comedy.

"I felt I was addicted to the laughs. I was addicted to the compliments that came with the show, and I could easily be shattered if someone didn't like my show," he said.

"I thought, 'I'm not going to become the person or comedian I want to become if I'm so dependent on being validated by people."

Now, comedy is Mandlsohn's full-time job, although he occasionally substitute teaches on the side and would like to get into television and movies. He owns two houses, one in Toronto and another in Los Angeles, and continues to tour North America.

In the past 11 years, his comedy style, which is a combination of observations, impersonations and funny faces, has matured.

"My routines have changed... before, there were a lot of impressions, it was character driven. Now, I have a stronger point of view on stage... now there's a point to the mimickery," he said.

"My jokes come from a lot of observations and a lot of things that frustrate me. Frustration is such a great emotion to create off of."

Mandlsohn's routine includes material about his time at teacher's college, his experiences with women and his religion.

"It's a small percentage [of my routine] but definitely a significant one... It affects me. There's aspects of how I've grown up as a Jewish person, things that I've really enjoyed and things that have frustrated me," he said.

While performing in American towns, Mandlsohn, who grew up in Toronto, was forced to step out of his comfort zone.

"I remember doing different audiences, coming into the States and doing a run in Florida. The audiences down there are Republican and religious. I'm everything the opposite. I'm more liberal minded... If I can make those people laugh, [my jokes] must be funny," he said.

Dylan Mandlsohn

When he can't identify with an audience, Mandlesohn tries to get the audience to identify with him.

"I have to get them to understand who I am... when I'm on stage, they can still see where I'm coming from even if they're like, 'I never had that experience before.'" he said.

"I'm a Jew. Some people have never met a Jewish person before, but I still make them laugh."

Mandlsohn is currently involved in the Groundlings Improvisational Troupe in Los Angeles.

"[Improv] is a different animal. Stand-up is one person behind a mike that... expects a laugh every 15 seconds. Improv is a scene. There can be no laughs until the very end," he said.

While Mandlsohn can be described as a seasoned professional, the comedian still gets nervous before his shows.

"It's a different type of nervous, like a roller-coaster ride, when you hear the click. You're already committed, you think, 'Oh my God, I can't believe I'm doing this,'" he said.

But still, he continues to perform.

"I really, really want to be on that ride. My wanting to be on that ride is bigger that the fear I have."

Mandlsohn's next shows in Canada are at Yuk Yuk's in Kitchener, Ont., on Feb.13 and 14.

His myspace page is at www.myspace.com/comediandylan.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

AUTHOR KATHY KACER WINS AWARD FOR THE DIARY OF LAURA'S TWIN

Kathy Kacer, a former psychologist turned author, has won the prestigious U.S. National Jewish Book Award in the children's and young adult category for The Diary of Laura's Twin, the latest in a string of popular titles she has produced for the Second Story Press' Holocaust Remembrance Series for Young Readers.

The book tells the story of a modern-day Jewish girl of bat mitzvah age who is "twinned" with a Jewish girl from the Warsaw Ghetto through a mysterious diary given to her by her teacher. The book includes photographs, biographies of young heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and true accounts of real young people being "twinned" with young Holocaust victims under the auspices of school programs on the Holocaust.

Kacer's previous books include Clara's War, Hiding Edith, and The Secret of Gabi's Dresser, the last of which she has adapted into a stage play. Her literary efforts have already reaped numerous prizes such as the Silver Birch, Red Maple, Hackmatack and Canadian Jewish Book Awards.

Kathy Kacer

The Jewish Book Council is slated to present Kacer with the 2008 National Jewish Book Award at a ceremony in New York City on March 5.

* * *

Film Events

• The Toronto Jewish Film Festival presents *Zone Libre* (Free Land), a French-made film (in French and Yiddish with English subtitles) that is "a stirring portrait of a French Jewish family during the German occupation." $15. Richmond Hill Silver City, 8725 Yonge St. Feb. 1, tea at 1 p.m., film at 2 p.m. 416-967-1528. www.tjff.com

• "Oh Canada!" is the topic of **Shlomo Schwartzberg**'s next film talk in his continuing series on International Jewish Cinema. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. $9, includes a light breakfast. Sunday, Feb. 1, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Registration, 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• Kultur, a New Jersey-based film producer, is releasing The Jews – A People's History, a two-part documentary that explores 4,000 years of Jewish history. Its purpose is "to give the public deeper insight, beyond the Holocaust and Israeli politics, of the Jewish people," said director **Nina Koshofer**. The company is also releasing We Want the Light, in which great Jewish musicians describe the triumph of cultural expression over oppression in Nazi Germany. www.kultur.com

* * *

Theatre Events

• Smouldering Masterpiece Theatre presents comedian **Deb Filler** in Well, I'll Tell Ya. $25. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. Jan. 29 and 31 at 8 p.m., Feb. 1 at 3 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org

• Amicus Productions presents A Flea in Her Ear, a fresh version by **David Ives** of **Georges Feydeau**'s saucy farce set in the naughty Paris of 1900. $20, $18. Fairview Library Theatre, 35 Don Mills Rd. Feb. 5 to 14. 416-860-6176, amicus.ca@gmail.com

•**David Mirvish** presents **Oprah Winfrey**'s musical production of The Color Purple, based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by **Alice Walker** and the film by **Steven Spielberg**, and direct from a two-year Broadway run. $26 to $120. Opens Feb. 10 at the Canon Theatre. 416-872-1212, www.mirvish.com

• A production of the stage musical The Wizard of Oz is seeking a little dog resembling a cairn terrier to play the part of Toto. Must be small enough to fit into a basket and able to sit, run, bark on command and follow a yellow brick road. Rehearsals begin Feb. 2. Audition hotline 647-722-6514. The musical runs Feb. 18 to 22 at the Isabel Bader Theatre. Proceeds go to the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario. $25, $40, $55. Tickets, 416-978-8849.

* * *

At the Galleries: "Mystics, Medics and Merchants," an exhibition of paintings by **Myriam Nafte**, is on view at the Miles Nadal JCC, Jacobs Lounge until March 8. A portion of sale proceeds will benefit the Downtown Jewish Community School.

Correction

In the movie review "The Galilee Eskimos is both bitter and sweet" (CJN, Jan.15), the name of the presenting organization is incorrect. The film was presented by the Toronto Jewish Film Festival. The CJN regrets the error.

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On Campus

York students' federation passes anti-Israel motion

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Hillel at York president Daniel Ferman said he is shocked that the York Federation of Students (YFS) focused on passing a motion condemning Israel last week, rather than on the 11-week York University strike.

The motion, which was passed unanimously by the YFS on Jan. 21, called the recent war between Israel and Hamas "the single largest massacre in Gaza," and said "Israel's current occupation of Gaza has dramatic negative implications on how Palestinian youth and their families access basic human rights."

The motion said that the YFS condemns "Israeli attacks on civilian, humanitarian targets, universities, United Nation schools and academic infrastructure in Gaza that have lead to the bombing and mass destruction of educational institutions and caused over 1,200 civilian deaths."

In Hillel's statement, Ferman wrote that the YFS didn't include a single motion that condemned Hamas "for targeting Israeli civilians with rocket fire over the past eight years, for using educational facilities, mosques and residential buildings as storehouses for arms, and for using students and other civilians as human shields for its terrorist activities."

Elaborating on the press release, Ferman told The CJN that the fact that YFS refers to all the casualties as "civilians, even though many were Hamas terrorists, clearly shows how much the YFS resolution is based on propaganda, rather than reality."

He added that while Hillel organized "a large contingent of students" to attend the meeting, "their concerns were ignored when it came to voting on the motion."

York student Mario Dell'Osso attended the meeting and later posted a note about the meeting on a Facebook group called York University Anti-Strike Group. "The motion passed unanimously with all members supporting it, despite the calls for amendment of the motion to identify the totality of the issue," Dell'Osso wrote.He also criticized the speaker who lead the meeting, Ashkon Hashemi, saying his behaviour was "inappropriate," and he appeared "irate and confrontational" when dealing with students who opposed the motion.

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By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

SAFED, Israel — Thanks to Canadian generosity, this ancient city in the Galilee is getting its first municipal park.

Partially funded by the Jewish National Fund of Canada, and the focus of Toronto's 2008 Negev Dinner in honour of Alan and Sandy Posluns, the Blue Valley Park is scheduled to open in the spring.

Although construction started last April, the 10 million shekel project – a joint undertaking of the JNF, the ministry of tourism and Safed's municipality – has been in the works for a decade, said Yacov Danino, a senior JNF official in Safed.

Intended to serve both local residents and foreign visitors, the park is in a steep valley in the Birya Forest, a well-known nature preserve in northern Israel.

It is designed to achieve three overlapping objectives: to develop a "green lung" for Safed, to create a recreational area for a city that, strangely enough, lacks a park, and to strengthen Safed's tourist infrastructure.

"Urban parks are an essential component of transforming and enriching our cities," said Danino, the director of the administration and maintenance department of JNF's northern region office.

Located at the western entrance of the city, the park will contain leisure areas, gardens with fruit trees, pools with ducks, geese and swans, streams, asphalt paths, restored terraces, picnic benches and a parking lot.

An observatory will offer stunning views of Mt. Meron – the highest peak within Israel's pre-1967 borders – and Nahal Amud, a popular hiking area.

The park already contains an old mikvah still in use and fed by a natural spring.

Built amidst an abandoned Armenian cemetery whose weathered headstones will remain untouched, the park will be surrounded by a fence to keep out wild animals.

Containing groves of gnarled, olive trees, it is also filled with a profusion of almond and carob trees, poplar and oak trees, Atlantic pistachio trees and shrubs and bushes.

"It will be a perfect place for a walk in a park," said Danino.

A grove of gnarled olive trees [Sheldon Kirshner photo]

Archeologists unearth sculpture from 2nd-3rd century

By NADAV SHRAGAI
© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — Archeologists have unearthed a marble sculpture during an excavation in Jerusalem's City of David that they say dates back to the second or third century CE.

The marble bust of a bearded man's head was discovered during the excavations that the Israel Antiquities Authority is conducting in the Givati car park in the walls around Jerusalem National Park.

Doron Ben-Ami and Yana Tchekhanovets, directors of the excavation at the site on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, said the figurine's short curly beard and head tilted to the right is indicative of Greek influence and can be dated to the time of the emperor Hadrian or shortly thereafter (second-to-third centuries CE).

According to Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets, "The high level of finish on the figurine is extraordinary, while meticulously adhering to the tiniest of details."

They added that the pale-yellow shade of the marble may point to the eastern origin of the raw material from which the image was carved, but they are still verifying that matter.

The figure's stylistic motifs, such as its short hairstyle, the prominent lobes and curves of the ears, as well as the almond-shaped eyes, suggest that the object most likely portrays an athlete, probably a boxer.

Boxing was one of the most popular fields of heavy athletics in Roman culture and more than once, Roman authors mention the demand by the Roman public in general, and the elite in particular, for boxing matches.

"To the best of our knowledge, to date no similar artifact made of marble (or any other kind of stone) bearing the same image that was just found has been discovered in excavations elsewhere in the country," Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets said. "It seems that what we have here is a unique find."

Not long ago, a collection of 264 gold coins was also uncovered at the same site.

Photo courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority

LEARNING ABOUT THE PAST: The Massuah Institute for the Study of the Holocaust at Kibbutz Tel Itzhak in Israel specializes in educational activities for young people and teachers from Israel and abroad. On Jan. 22, the institute hosted cultural attachés to Israel for an event to mark the fourth international Holocaust Commemoration Day.

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Pressel makes golf history by age 20

By MARVIN GLASSMAN
Special to The CJN

BOCA RATON, Fla.— Most golfers at 20 are still learning the game, but American Jewish pro Morgan Pressel made golf history by winning her second pro tournament in 2008.

In only her third year competing on the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) circuit, Pressel became one of only four players in LPGA history to win two tournaments by age 20, after winning the Kapula Classic in October. Shooting an eight-under-par 280, she won the tournament impressively with three birdies in her last four holes for a one-stroke victory over Suzann Pettersen.

Pressel's achievement is especially noteworthy, considering that recently retired LPGA Hall of Famer Annika Sorenstam and current top-ranked golfer Lorena Ochoa both didn't win their first tournaments until age 23.

"There are never any guarantees in golf, but Morgan has more than a head start to becoming one of the great golfers in LPGA history," said retired LPGA Hall of Famer Amy Alcott, who is also a member of the International Jewish Sport Hall of Fame in Israel.

"I won three tournaments by age 20 and had a great belief in myself, which Morgan also has. She is destined to be a Hall of Fame golfer."

Pressel's first brush with history came in 2001, when she was the youngest golfer ever to qualify for the U.S. Women's Open as a 12-year-old. In 2007, she made history again by became the youngest ever, at 18 years and 10 months, to win a major championship – the Kraft Nabisco Championships in Rancho Mirage, Calif.

"I am elated at what I achieved so far, but I want to strive to do better. I learned very quickly that to do well at golf, I have to work hard on it," Pressel said.

To achieve that end, Pressel hired Adam Schreiber as her coach in early 2008. He helped improve her swing and distance, two of her weaknesses.

Morgan Pressel

Despite winning her second tournament, passing the $2 million (US) mark in career earnings and finishing in the top 10 five times, Pressel also missed the cut five times last season and is ranked under 100 for distance. Putting remains her forte.

"I have to work hard at this. I'm not happy if I don't improve," Pressel said.

"You have to be a perfectionist to win at golf. I hated to lose more than I enjoyed the wins, and that drove me to a great career, and I see Morgan reacting the same way," Alcott said.

Pressel's other asset is having her grandfather, Herb Krickstein, by her side. He's been a mentor to Morgan since she took up the game at age eight.

For Krickstein, it was deja vu to again guide a young athlete. Some 26 years ago, his son, Aaron, made history at age 16 by becoming the youngest person to win a pro tennis title – in Tel Aviv. Krickstein was a world top 10 tennis player from 1983 to 1994, ranking as high as sixth in the world in 1990.

But Pressel's young life has not been all about fun and golf.

Her mother, Kathy, died of breast cancer in 2003 at age 43, and Pressel has dedicated herself to raising funds to fight the disease. Her tournament in Boca Raton has raised $800,000 (US) over the past two years.

Pressel's fame as a rising star and the only Jew on the LPGA tour has made Jewish community leaders seek her out for fundraising events, as was the case when Maccabi Canada in Ottawa gave Pressel a reception when she competed at the CN Canadian Women's Open in August.

"I love to be the catalyst to draw young Jews and others to compete in golf, so I want to set an example by being proud of who I am and all I accomplish and hope to accomplish," she said.

Gaza war spurs interest in Maccabiah Games

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Israel's incursion into Gaza had an unexpected effect on the Maccabi sports movement.

Maccabi Canada has been swamped since late December, when hostilities began, with hundreds of calls from athletes who want to compete in the Maccabiah Games this summer, said Leon Elfassy.

Elfassy heads Maccabi Canada's National Athletic Committee (NAC), responsible for having the final say on who competes.

"It's been unbelievable. It's totally different than in 2001," he said.

That was the year when, as the result of the second intifadah and terrorist attacks in Israel, Canada came within a hair's-breadth of not participating at all.

"We were getting hundreds of phone calls to cancel," Elfassy said. "People were concerned, questioning." The number of athletes who eventually did go was significantly reduced. Violence just days before the Games and fear of violence contributed to keeping participants away.

"Now we're getting calls of support. 'How can we help? What can we do?'" Elfassy said

The difference in the community's attitude, he readily acknowledged, probably lies in the timing. This time, six months still remain until the July 12 start.

"If [the Gaza war] had happened in June, a month before the Games, it might have had a different impact," Elfassy said.

The surge in demand to compete at the Games stands out all the more in light of the fact that several Maccabiah events are slated to take place in areas of southern Israel, within range of rockets and missiles from Gaza, such as Ashdod.

In any case, he said that that while team sports have quotas on the number of athletes competing, increased support for the Games in Canada coming out of the Gaza situation will translate into more individuals competing, especially in the master's category (over age 35) in such sports as swimming, golf and tennis.

As things stand, Canada is due to send a record number of more than 450 Jewish amateur athletes to the 18th, "chai" edition of the Maccabiah Games, as well as 100 or so coaches, managers, trainers and medical staff, for a total of about 550 – another record.

Elfassy said Canada has a good shot at medals in wrestling, softball, junior baseball, rhythmic gymnastics, cycling, soccer and golf. Montreal golfer Daniel Knight is only a teen, but is so good he'll play on the men's "open" golf team instead of with the juniors.

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Low-maintenance love

ALMOST FAMOUS

By Jacob Medjuck

St. Valentine has a day named for him that historically been rather dangerous for Jews. That said, it's also an annual celebration of romance. This year, my college roommate has finally decided to achieve success at dating, and his strategy boils down to a sense of humour, abs of steel, and plants.

"A sense of humour– women put this high on their list," he tells me. Fortunately for my old friend, he's got the funny.

But although humour is truly a true social tool, is it really the key to romance? I did comedy for seven years. I was lousy for six of them. In my last year at the microphone, with my sharpest stuff firing. I observed this strange reaction from crowds: laughter. Women would say, "That guy was funny." Which started well enough. And then they'd go home and undress for their boyfriends, which to me was not funny.

My shows became foreplay for other couples.

Women don't want to be with a guy who's funny, they want to be "near" a guy who's funny – and then go home with Brad Pitt.

Which brings us to Brad Pitt's "Fight Club" abs of Adonis. That should do the trick. I've never had this trick to employ myself, although I've heard of its mystical allure.

A meticulous diet, a regimen of exercise and calorie-counting, or a series of ridiculous surgeries will provide the prescribed steel-cut abs that women melt over. I've seen men spend fortunes on fitness, gym memberships and protein powders chasing that elusive, chiselled charm. It has thus become my opinion that men desire Brad Pitt's abs slightly more than women do.

To confound the point entirely, when I look outside, I see thousands of doughy dudes in happy relationships.

Abs, I believe, are a plus, but not a limiting factor.

You could always argue that a man's net worth is the aphrodisiac – but in this economy, who's worth anything anymore? And people are still successfully dating.

Humour: you're either born with it, or you're not. But what does it matter when you can put on Seinfeld and dim the lights?

Abs: you're either born with them, or you buy them, paying in sweat and broccoli, or liposuction. But I've got chubby chums who prove they're not necessary.

And although it's ridiculous, Ockham's razor ultimately solves the question logically: with all other things being equal, the simplest solution is often the correct one.

Plants. The secret to attracting a female is vegetation. Plants in a home set the mood.

Think carefully before you criticize. House plants are supposed to represent nurturing, the ability to let life flourish under one's care.

Says the girl: "Oh, I notice you have a plant. Can I stay over tonight?"

Plants don't rely on your genetics, on your income or your sense of humour. You don't have to grow them, or even buy them – you can dig them up and bring them home (although I suggest buying or growing).

Bald or coifed, tall or stout, it's not the size of a man but the colour of his thumb that counts.

Accepting this, I took my college roommate to the plant store. We asked, "Which plant is least likely to die?"

The wise shopkeeper corrected us: "We prefer to ask, 'Which plants can thrive with the least light and care?'"

And with that, he had us nailed: "Able to provide the least light and care."

In that moment, we realized the seed of our previous romantic failures – that is, from where the trouble stemmed.

It wasn't a sense of humour, abs or money that we lacked. Apparently, we were simply missing the desire to care sufficiently.

Regardless, we left with two cacti and a jade plant.

Desert fauna. A start.

Note to finer gentleman: water your wives.

ELLA'S HUNGARIAN GOULASH SOUP

- 2 lbs beef cut into 1"cubes
- 1 5.5 oz can tomato paste
- 2 med onions, chopped
- 4 1/2 c beef stock
- 3 med. carrots, sliced
- 2 celery stalks, cubed
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp salt
- 3/4 tbsp Hungarian hot paprika
- 2 1/2 tbsp. Hungarian sweet paprika
- 1 cup diced tomatoes (with liquid)
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 tblsp flour
- 1/2 tsp caraway seeds
- 3 c boiling water
- 1 parsnip, cubed
- 3 potatoes, cubed
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp pepper

Mix paprika & flour; coat beef with mixture. Heat oil in non stick pan; sear beef on all sides. Set aside (include brown bits from pan). In large pot on top of stove, add a little oil and saute onion and caraway seedsuntil soft. Add beef, brown bits from pan and broth; cook for 1/2 hour. Add in remaining ingredients. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 1 1/2 hours stirring occasionally to avoid sticking. *Yield: 10 servings.*

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Food is key to fitness

FITNESS CORNER

By FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

Food. Why has it become so complicated?

I'm always amazed at how often I talk about food during sessions with my clients. I answer more questions every day about food than I do about exercise.

You see, exercise is easy. Our bodies love to move, and once we show out bodies how to do that, they usually crave it. But what constitutes a healthy meal choice has become more and more confusing.

Our bodies reflect what we eat. Our food choices make up 50 to 70 per cent of what our bodies look like. We are being bombarded every day with quick, easy ways to achieve our weight loss goals, yet most of them don't include exercise or balanced nutritional choices.

Food is big business, but what's become an even bigger business is diets and weight loss. The best way to get healthy, fit and lean forever is to eat right and exercise regularly. Eating right is really simple if you think about it and follow these simple rules: you need a lean protein, a healthy fat and a good carbohydrate in every meal, not only for energy but also for health and wellness.

If you feel tired within an hour after eating a meal or snack, most likely you have made a bad food choice. Read the labels on the foods that you buy. If you don't understand what's in it, don't eat it.

Healthy fats are very important for weight management. Your body won't release toxic fat if you don't give it healthy fat, because healthy fat is necessary for cellular production. Fruits and vegetables are good for you because of their high nutritional value, especially right after a workout, as they replace the glycogen stores that you've just used up.

For example, eating an apple after your workout will increase your body's ability to repair muscle and reduce delayed onset muscle soreness. Foods that are high in fibre and protein keep you full longer and help lower your blood sugar levels. Finally, lean protein is important, especially if you want to produce muscle – no protein, no muscle.

Have questions? E-mail me at felycesfitness@rogers.com.

Lecture halls without borders

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

What role do we Jews in the Diaspora play in securing Israel and the Jewish people?

Some of our community members engage in advocacy, others in philanthropy, and there are those who frequently travel to Israel in support of our brothers and sisters there and the economy.

There are, however, other types of Jews, those whom we call activists – individuals who generally operate at a grassroots level, ready and willing to engage our opponents and/or enemies in the field of battle outside the war zone.

Some of these activists can be found in our Jewish communal offices, shuls or quietly strategizing at home with friends and neighbours.

And then there are a group of Jewish student activists who attend our local and out-of-town universities and colleges, those who steadfastly stand toe to toe and eye to eye with our adversaries and enemies in large, unfriendly central squares and lecture halls without borders.

They are activists by choice and situation, and they do our community proud as they courageously take positions on the front line of fighting anti-Semitism and defending Israel.

An example of the Jewish student activism I speak of was a rally co-ordinated by the students of Hasbara Fellowships, Hillel of Greater Toronto and the Canadian Centre for Israel Activism held on Jan. 18, called Toronto for Israel.

This magnificently proud rally, staged in Dundas Square in downtown Toronto, attracted well over 1,000 people from the Jewish and non-Jewish student bodies, supportive professors (somewhat of an oxymoron) and community members.

The objective of this outdoor demonstration, according to the co-ordinators, was to "demonstrate solidarity with the people of Israel who have endured more than 10,000 Hamas terrorist missiles and mortar shells from Gaza for nearly nine years."

And indeed it did.

With great pride, throngs of Canadian and Israeli-flag-waving Jewish demonstrators listened, clapped and cheered as university student activists sang their praises for Israel, its humanitarian approach to the war in Gaza, and its heroic fight against terrorism. With the gusto and resolve of U.S. civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., those brave young Jews raised their voices above the rooftops, on a chilly snowy Sunday afternoon, chanting *Am Yisrael Chai* – the Nation of Israel Shall Live. Well done!

Throughout the rally, I stood next to a Jewish community leader who filled me in some of the background of the event.

She said the students decided to hold the demonstration because they recognized the need to do so in the face of the world, and in earshot of "the other side." She added it is not always easy being a Jewish student activist, especially when some professors make their anti-Israel opinions known. (To this end, Hillel of Greater Toronto offers counselling services for students who need to talk through their feelings after facing frequently virulent anti-Israel/Jewish sentiment. Support your local Hillel! They are innovative.)

According to Zak Kay, the executive director of Hillel of Greater Toronto since 1995 and recent award winner for a quarter century of leadership with Hillel, "the students felt the outdoor demonstration was the right thing to do. They wanted to take back the streets (from the 'other side'). They wanted to be out there on their terms. They did a great job."

We often wonder where Diaspora Jews stand on the stage of Jewishness and safety for Israel. In many ways, this query is answered by the teenagers we send off to college and university who while there, turn into strong young adults, gracefully and courageously accepting the mantle of Jewish leadership through activism.

Accolades to our Jewish student activists. Thank you for answering this question. *Am Yisrael Chai!*

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National

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CAMPAIGN IN FULL SWING: Israeli Foreign Minister and Kadima party leader Tzipi Livni, left, admires twin babies at a shopping mall in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon on Jan. 30. A new poll predicts Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu will win 28 seats in Israel's 120-seat Knesset in Feb. 10 national elections, five seats more than his closest rival, Livni, which will give him the best chance of forming a governing coalition. *[Flash 90 photo]*

Israeli rabbi rejects Toronto conversion

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The son of a prominent philosopher who urged Jews to retain their identity in order to deny Hitler a posthumous victory has had his own Jewish status denied by a Jerusalem rabbinic court.

In a case that was expected to merely finalize a divorce between Yossi Fackenheim and his wife, Iris, a *dayan* (judge) ruled that Fackenheim's conversion as an infant 29 years ago, performed by an Orthodox rabbinic court in Toronto, no longer had any effect.

Fackenheim, the son of renowned scholar Emil Fackenheim, said the judge came to that conclusion after questioning him about his level of observance and his record of attending synagogue.

Questions status of Fackenheim's son

The decision not only affects his status as a Jew, it also brings into question the Jewish status of many other Orthodox converts, Fackenheim, 29, stated.

"I have friends who live in fear that their conversion may be revoked," he said on the phone from London, where he is studying for a master's degree.

Fackenheim, who has lived in Israel since childhood, said he is appealing the decision on a number of fronts. He has complained about the presiding judge's findings to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, as well as to a rabbinic court ombudsman and to Rabbi Eli Ben Dahan, director of Israel's rabbinical courts. The Chief Rabbinate has deferred to the ombudsman, who is conducting a review of the decision. Fackenheim has also retained the Israel Religious Action Center for legal assistance.

The irony of the situation is not lost on Fackenheim, whose father, Emil, a Holocaust survivor and a Reform rabbi, posited one of the most influential concepts of post-Holocaust Jewry. Known as the 614th commandment, it stated, in part: deny Hitler a posthumous victory by remaining Jewish.

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Shuls attacked in Venezuela, Turkey – please see page 29

The News in Brief

Canada

Book Award Finalist

TORONTO — New Jewish Feminism, a recent book edited by Rabbi Elyse Goldstein, rabbinic director of Kolel: The Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning in Toronto, has been selected as a finalist in the 2008 National Book Awards in the category of women's studies, the Jewish Book Council said last week. The awards, sponsored by the New York-based council, have been handed out since 1948.

Shoah Day Marked

TORONTO — The 2005 resolution establishing the United Nations' annual Holocaust Remembrance Day on Jan. 27 entrenches the lessons of the Shoah, rejects Holocaust denial, condemns all intolerance and is a call to action to end genocides in places such as Darfur, Canadian Jewish Congress said in marking the day last week. The day also "reaffirms the UN's paramount role and responsibility in preventing future instances of genocide," CJC co-president Rabbi Reuven Bulka said in a statement.

World

Offer for Meatpacker

DES MOINES — An Israeli firm has offered to buy Agriprocessors. Soglowek Nahariya made the offer for the kosher meat producer in a filing Jan 25 with an Iowa bankruptcy court, the Des Moines Register reported. Once the largest U.S. producer of kosher meat, Agriprocessors filed for bankruptcy in November. It had been on a downward spiral since May, when U.S. agents raided its Postville, Iowa, slaughterhouse and arrested more than one-third of its workers in the largest single-site immigration raid in U.S. history. The bankruptcy trustee who is running the firm was encouraged by the offer, but said a sale could take months. Soglowek Nahariya, a leading producer of meat, poultry and vegetarian products, is know here for its Zoglo's brand vegetarian products.

Rubashkin Freed

DUBUQUE, Iowa — Former kosher meatpacking executive Sholom Rubashkin was released on bail last week after posting $500,000 bond and being fitted with an ankle bracelet. The ex-manager of the Agriprocessors meat plant in Postville, Iowa, the scene last May of the largest immigration raid in U.S. history, Rubashkin was arrested twice on a range of charges including bank fraud, money laundering and helping illegal immigrants procure fake documentation. A U.S. judge, invoking Israel's Law of Return, ruled that he posed a flight risk and should be detained until trial. His lawyers appealed.

Gaza Appeal Airs, But Not on BBC or Sky

LONDON — An emergency appeal for Gaza aired on British television stations, but not the London-based global broadcasters BBC and Sky.

Police evacuated a group of protesters last Monday night who entered the BBC Television Centre in West London and chanted "BBC Shame on You."

Stop the War Coalition, the group behind recent anti-Israel protests in Britain, is calling on its members to protest the BBC's decision not to broadcast the Jan. 26 appeal by cancelling their TV licence, the annual charge levied on Britons with a TV set and the BBC's main source of funding. The BBC received thousands of e-mails for and against its decision not to broadcast the appeal, with the majority protesting it.

Views have been mixed in the U.K. media. Some commentators not only justified the BBC's decision but also criticized some charities involved in the appeal.

Both the BBC and Sky said broadcasting the appeal would compromise their impartiality. While the BBC, a public broadcaster, has been facing criticism, Sky, a commercial broadcaster, has not been in the spotlight. In 2006, the BBC refused a similar request to broadcast an emergency appeal for Lebanon.

About $1.9 million has been collected for the appeal, far less than for previous, less controversial appeals.

Poll Finds Prejudice

ROME — A new poll found that 45 per cent of Italians harbour some prejudice against Jews. The Corriere della Sera newspaper reported Jan. 26 on the survey, conducted by Milan's Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation. It identified three forms of stereotypes that coexist in Italy but don't necessarily overlap. Ten per cent of Italians harbour only "classic" stereotypes, such as "Jews are not really Italians at heart" or "Jews can't be trusted," while 11 per cent harbour only "modern" stereotypes, such as Jews control politics and the media or are more loyal to Israel than their home countries. Some 12 per cent held "contingent" stereotypes, largely linked to anti-Zionist views. About 12 per cent held views in all three categories. Italy's president warned of a new rise in anti-Semitism in a ceremony marking International Holocaust Memorial Day, which Italy commemorated with hundreds of events.

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Ignatieff gives Cotler advisory role on human rights

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Irwin Cotler says his new post as the Liberals' special counsel on human rights and international justice suits him perfectly and should not be seen as a consolation prize for not being named to Michael Ignatieff's shadow cabinet.

The Liberal leader appointed Cotler, member of Parliament for Mount Royal for almost 10 years, to the new role on Friday.

Cotler, justice minister in the short-lived government of Paul Martin, was human rights critic while Stéphane Dion was leader, and public security critic under interim leader Bill Graham.

Irwin Cotler

Cotler said in an interview that he had requested not to be named to the shadow cabinet, which was announced Jan. 22. Ignatieff had informed him that the human rights critic post would be eliminated because it does not correspond to one in the Harper cabinet, and Cotler felt any other duties on the Opposition front bench would hinder his ability to continue to devote as much time to his many international activities.

"The new post frees me up to do the things that I do best... It's exactly what I wanted," Cotler, 68, said. He believes he will, in fact, be able to expand his work abroad, which often keeps him away from Parliament.

Cotler said he wants to put to rest speculation that he was snubbed by Ignatieff because he supported Bob Rae for the party leadership in 2006 or that the decision was related to Ignatieff's remark earlier that year on a popular Quebec television show that Israel had committed a war crime in Lebanon during its conflict with Hezbollah.

Soon after the remark was made, Cotler's Israeli-born wife, Ariela, publicly renounced her party membership accusing Ignatieff in a letter to the National Post of "a lack of moral integrity, sacrificing facts and truth on the altar of political correctness and personal political gains" in the leadership campaign.

Cotler noted that despite the strain, his longstanding "close personal and professional relationship" with Ignatieff, whose career has also been devoted to the furtherance of human rights, never faltered, and even at the time, he defended Ignatieff's right to his opinion.

Ariela Cotler and Ignatieff have long been reconciled, he added.

Cotler's main projects relating to his new job include trying to gather international support for a petition to hold the Iranian regime accountable for "genocidal incitement," co-chairing the founding conference of the International Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism in London from Feb. 15 to 17, building a legal case against Hamas for war crimes, bringing sanctions against Sudan for the Darfur crisis, and continuing to represent a number of political prisoners around the world.

"I can continue to do all those things and be wherever I have to be, and the leader is encouraging me to do it," Cotler said.

He was in Israel in an official capacity from Dec. 25 to Jan. 13, spending part of that time in the south while it was under the threat of rocket attack from Gaza.

In announcing Cotler's appointment, Ignatieff stated: "I am privileged to work with one of the world's most respected and recognized human rights experts. Our caucus will benefit greatly from his wisdom and counsel."

Cotler was one of three special advisers named, along with two other Martin-era ministers, Ujjal Dosanjh, who is chair of the new Intergovernmental Liaison Secretariat, and Ken Dryden, who is national outreach adviser, with a focus on working families and poverty.

There are two Jewish members on the slimmed-down 33-member shadow cabinet: Raymonde Folco is the critic for La Francophonie, and Anita Neville is responsible for the status of women.

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Taliban and Hamas of one piece

This past weekend we read the sad news that Sean Greenfield, 25, was killed in a roadside bomb attack about 40 kilometres west of Kandahar City. He was the 108th Canadian soldier to die on duty in Afghanistan.

Our sympathies, condolences and tears go out to the young man's family.

It is a hard, harsh and very bitter price that Canada and the Canadian armed forces are paying for the sake of the mission so very far away. In some quarters that price is testing Canadian resolve to maintain and support the mission.

But the case for the mission is clear.

The people of Afghanistan, indeed, in the entire region, need help to free themselves from the brutal oppression of the Taliban.

Last weekend, the Globe and Mail published a story that depicted the nature of that oppression and conversely, the nature of the courage of the ordinary Afghans who oppose it.

In an attempt to close down a girls' school in Kandahar last November, a group of Taliban terrorists threw acid into the faces of a number of girls and teachers.

The Taliban refuse to allow girls and women to be educated or to work outside of the homes. The acid incident was an attempt to intimidate the parents of the girls and the teachers to shut down the school. But the school remains open. The headmaster, the parents and the students refuse to surrender their freedom to the Taliban.

The weekend story echoes a horrifying news brief that appeared two weeks earlier in the Globe and Mail, on Jan. 17. The dateline was from Peshawar, Pakistan, but the story concerned the very same issue of Taliban cruelty toward women.

Two paragraphs from the four-paragraph news follow.

"Last month, a local Taliban commander threatened to kill girls attending classes after Jan. 15 and to blow up schools where girls are enrolled.

"As a result, about 400 private schools are unlikely to open their doors next month after winter holidays, leaving tens of thousands of students with no educational options, the official said."

If there are humanitarian causes on this earth for democratic, freedom-loving, life-affirming nations to support, then surely the liberation from Taliban tyranny is such a cause.

The commitment of Canadian armed forces to this cause is noble, honourable, fully in keeping with our history and traditions and worthy of our support.

The oppressive, subjugating nature of the extremist Taliban is abhorrent to the values that underpin our society.

They are also of a piece with the oppressive nature of the extremist Hamas, though many in the West, especially in Europe, are oblivious to the close comparison.

Hamas leaders abuse their own people. It is widely known that Hamas routinely violates every convention of international humanitarian law and convention: they use their own people as shields; they launch their rockets against civilian targets; they launch their rockets from the homes of their own people; they hide, abuse and exploit public and even religious institutions.

These tactics were exposed a number of times by western correspondents during Israel's war in Gaza. Palestinian and other Arab media do not generally report on Hamas' battle tactics.

The Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center in Israel has recounted three articles by western correspondents.

In a story that appeared on Jan. 26, Jason Koutsoukis, a reporter with Australia's Sydney Morning Herald interviewed a Gazan ambulance driver, who described how Hamas operatives tried to force him to use his ambulance to evacuate them from a battle zone.

In a story in the New York Times on Jan. 19, Ethan Bronner wrote that Hamas fighters "fired rockets in between the houses and covered the alleys with sheets so they could set the rockets up in five minutes without the planes seeing them. The moment they fired, they escaped."

In a story on Jan. 22 in Italy's Corriere della Sera, Lorenzo Cremonesi talked to ordinary Gazans about rockets fired from the roofs of their houses and about Hamas operatives who hid in hospitals. He was told by Palestinians that "the militiamen sought shelter in the administration buildings, and that they used the ambulances and forced the drivers and nurses to take off their uniforms with their paramedic badges so that they would not be targeted by Israeli snipers."

It is astonishing and inherently inconsistent with decency and honesty that the conscience of Ban Ki-Moon, the secretary general of the United Nations, for example, or the many marchers and protesters against Israel seems so little bothered by these outrages – of the Taliban and Hamas both. Their pique seems particularly aroused by and obsessively reserved for Israel.

Canadian parliamentarian and human rights activist Irwin Cotler has written that "Israel does deserve fairness and equality before the law, and before the international community."

To our chagrin and our worry, it receives neither.

– MBD

SeeJN

ANOTHER PAIR OF EYES

The Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind enables visually impaired Israelis to achieve independence, mobility and self-esteem through working partnerships with guide dogs. The dogs are provided free of charge thanks to the generosity of donors. Pictured, second from right, with three other recent graduates at the centre in Israel, is Amit Bar-El, a soldier injured during the 2006 Lebanon War, with his guide dog Dylan. Visit www.israel-guidedog.org.

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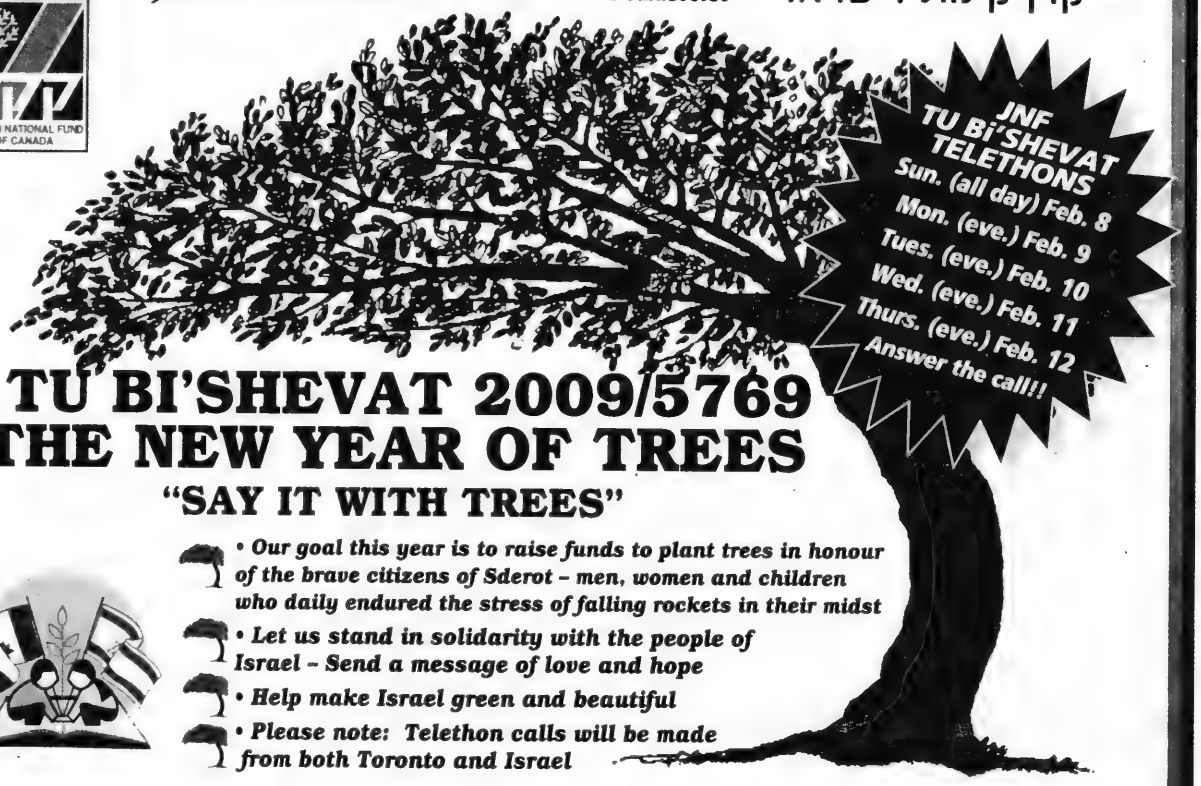

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Yossi Fackenheim quizzed about his observance

Continued from page 1

Adding to the irony was that his father "went to the Orthodox so we would not have problems [about Jewish status] down the line. Now Orthodox converts have the rug pulled out from under them," he stated.

Fackenheim is outraged at the ruling and at the presiding judge of the Jerusalem Rabbinic Court, Rabbi Yissachar Dov Hagar.

"He stepped all over my identity and my father's memory," he said. "I think he'd be furious. I think he'd be livid. You know the 614th mitzvah. This is the exact opposite of that. It's the antithesis of everything he ever worked for. It's dividing the Jewish people."

During the hearing, Rabbi Hagar questioned Fackenheim closely when he saw his profile, which indicated he had been born of a non-Jewish mother but had been converted at eight days of age by the Toronto beit din (rabbinic court). He asked whether Fackenheim kept Shabbat, ate kosher food, observed all the mitzvot (commandments) and attended synagogue regularly. He asked when Fackenheim had stopped living an Orthodox lifestyle (it occurred when his mother was stricken by Alzheimer's when he was around 12 to14, though he did have a bar mitzvah at 13). Based on the answers, Rabbi Hagar concluded Fackenheim had renounced his faith and there was no need for a divorce since Halachah does not recognize marriage between Jews and non-Jews.

At the request of Fackenheim's ex-wife and to ensure she faced no future questions about her marital status, Rabbi Hagar agreed to issue a *get* (divorce decree), but with a document attached that stated the rabbinic court did not recognize Fackenheim as a Jew. The divorce decree refers to Fackenheim as "'Yosef who goes by the name Yossi the convert,' which is a hop, skip and a jump from Yossi the goy," Fackenheim said.

The decision surprised Rabbi Reuven Tradburks, a member of the conversion committee of the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), an umbrella organization representing 1,000 Orthodox rabbis in North America. He questioned Rabbi Hagar's re-examination of Fackenheim's childhood conversion.

"To look at personal behaviour, to look at the validity of a conversion 29 years ago is highly objectionable," Rabbi Tradburks said.

Current behaviour should have no impact on the validity of a conversion. "Conversion can only be valid or invalid at the moment it is confirmed," he said.

If the convert sincerely accepts Judaism at the time of the conversion and later completely abandons the faith the conversion remains intact, Rabbi Tradburks, president of the Toronto Vaad Harabonim (Orthodox council), added.

Rabbi Martin Lockshin, a professor at York University, said the decision "definitely shows the arbitrary and dangerous nature of the haredi-dominated beit din system in Israel… This type of action is unprecedented in Jewish history and must be decried."

Rabbi Lockshin suggested the impact of the rabbinic court's decision could be far-reaching. "All of the converts converted in Toronto 29 years ago and 39 years ago and 49 years ago and all the descendants of the females among those converts now have to worry that some haredi judge will declare them to be gentiles. This is unconscionable and unthinkable."

Rabbi Avi Shafran, director of public affairs for Agudath Israel of America, said legitimate conversions should be beyond challenge. "What matters is whether the conversion was done properly – including the reasonable conclusion that the convert is undertaking halachic observance. If such a conclusion is reasonably reached by the beit din, the convert is Jewish, even if he or she lapses at a later time. If, however, it seems the convert never had any intention to be observant, the conversion is subject to being undermined.

"It indicates that the single standard of Halachah – which is the sole true unifier of the Jewish people – is being taken seriously by Israel's rabbinate."

Rabbi Tradburks said Rabbi Hagar's decision should have no impact on current and future conversions conducted under Orthodox auspices in North America. The RCA agreed about two years ago to tighten the requirements for conversion and adopt a universal set of criteria that would conform to standards agreeable to the Israeli rabbinate. It has also developed a cadre of rabbinic authorities who are delegated with approving all Orthodox conversions in North America.

However, two years ago, when the Toronto Beit Din was considering adopting the new standards, Rabbi Tradburks told The CJN, "I don't believe there will be changes for child conversions that have already been done."

Rabbi Hagar's ruling likely points to the tension between the Israeli rabbinate and North American rabbis over acceptable standards for conversion. "The Israeli rabbinate did not accept what was the norm in North America for many years," Rabbi Tradburks said.

Until North American batei din changed their standards two years ago to match Israeli practices – requiring converts be Torah-observant Jews – they operated under the influence of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, who argued that a day school education and a traditional Jewish home would be influential enough to ensure a converted child practises Judaism, even if the parents were not particularly observant.

"The Israeli rabbinate never really accepted that," Rabbi Tradburks stated. "That could be what Rabbi Hagar is challenging."

Complicating the issue was a decision last year by an Israeli rabbinic court that called into question the legitimacy of thousands of Israeli conversions conducted under one of Israel's most respected Orthodox halachic authorities, Rabbi Chaim Druckman.

Despite the high regard for Rabbi Druckman, a haredi rabbinic appeal court last year annulled the marriage of an Ashdod man whose wife was converted by Rabbi Druckman 15 years earlier. The appeal court ruled the conversion was flawed and insincere and that consequently, the couple were never married.

Rabbi Lockshin said the Fackenheim decision should worry the Toronto beit din, which operates under the Vaad Harabonim. "While it is true that the Vaad Harabonim of Toronto has been seriously 'haredized' over the last 29 years, they should realize that even their own semi-haredi conversions are also subject to disqualification from Israeli haredi judges. This is not an idle concern.

"Modern Orthodox Jews and modern Orthodox rabbinical organizations must not cede to Israeli haredim," Rabbi Lockshin continued. "They must strengthen the hands of modern Orthodox forces in Israel and encourage them to set up alternate rabbinical systems that will allow Israelis to circumvent the haredi-dominated system."

Funds raised to build better bomb shelters for kids

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

In a show of solidarity with the Israeli community of Sderot, hundreds gathered here to raise money for better bomb shelters at daycare centres to protect children from Hamas rocket attacks.

Na'amat Canada, a chapter of a worldwide progressive women's organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for families in Israel and abroad, organized a benefit concert titled Stand Strong With Israel, Jan. 25 at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Congregation.

The goal of the campaign was to help the 2,000 children who attend 27 Na'amat daycare centres within Hamas rocket range by building bigger safe rooms, purchasing more emergency equipment and providing psychological counselling for traumatized children.

The event included performances by actor, writer and comedian Deb Filler, Israeli singer Doron Mazar and Beth David's Cantor Marshall Loomer.

Speaking to an audience of about 400 people, the shul's Rabbi Philip Scheim voiced his concerns about Israel's security, which many in the community share.

"When will there be an end to terror? When will Israeli children be able to attend school without fear of having to run to a shelter, without having to spend day and night at times in shelters?" Rabbi Scheim asked.

Thornhill MPP Peter Shurman spoke about the fear young families in Sderot live with everyday.

"Here in Canada, daycare is about playtime, practical and elementary learning, and socialization. In Israel, daycare is about that, plus post-traumatic stress disorder, psychological treatment of children and special workshops to help children deal with what they faced and continue to face," said Shurman, a former CFRB talk radio host.

Israeli singer Doron Mazar is joined on stage by the Na'amat Canada volunteers during his performance.

"Living here in Canada, we often take for granted our freedom to enjoy the simplest things, like walking to a park or watching our children play in a playground. It is easy to forget that there are places in the world like Sderot where those very simple things are a luxury, where parents crave for a time when they will be able to walk their children to school, or take them to a park, without watching the sky for incoming rockets or wondering where the nearest bomb shelter is."

Israeli ambassador to Canada Miriam Ziv, who made her first Toronto public appearance at the event, gave her thoughts about what led to Operation Cast Lead, the recent war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

"For eight years, Israeli civilians have been under ongoing attacks from Gaza on a daily basis," Ziv said.

She added that over the years, the primitive Qassam rockets used at first were upgraded to Grad missiles, which are more accurate and can travel farther into Israel, and Hamas has obtained more sophisticated weapons from Iran, which are smuggled through underground tunnels.

"The result was that the lives of almost a million citizens of Israel were disrupted. Children could not go to schools and businesses had to be closed down," Ziv said.

"The feeling in Israel, across the whole country, was that 'enough is enough. We cannot take any more. This cannot continue.'"

Ziv said the goal of the war was to bring normalcy back to the lives of Israelis and to make sure that the illegal smuggling of weapons into Gaza would end.

"This cannot be achieved by Israel alone. It has to be achieved through the work of the international community."

She conceded that while Israeli citizens have suffered, so too have Gazans.

"Hamas, in their blatant disregard for human life, have used the citizens of Gaza as human shields. We have tried to avoid harming civilians and there are many examples where the Israeli air force dumped leaflets into the villages to tell the citizens to leave their houses" from which Hamas militants were firing rockets.

"Israel is entitled to defend itself from a terrorist organization, the goal of which is to destroy Israel," she said, adding that Israel continues to work for the release of Gilad Schalit, an Israeli soldier who has been held captive by Hamas since 2006.

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Stark reminiscence of a very dark time

Last Shabbat, more than a dozen armed hoodlums and thugs stormed Tiferet Israel Sephardi synagogue in Caracas, Venezuela, the city's oldest shul, overwhelmed the two security guards, ransacked the place, defaced it with brutish graffiti threats and damaged the synagogue's sifrei Torah. It was the second time in the past month that the synagogue has been attacked.

The physical violence however is the predictable, if also ugly, worrisome result of the rhetorical violence against Jews and the Jewish state by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

In 2002, he described an attempted coup against him as "a Zionist plot masterminded by the Mossad." In 2005, as part of his Christmas address, Chavez said that "some minorities, descendants of the same ones who crucified Christ… took all the world's wealth for themselves." Two weeks ago, during the Gaza war. Chavez again menacingly browbeat the Jews of Venezuela by emphatically suggesting that they condemn "Israel's barbarism." He then expelled the Israeli ambassador and cut diplomatic ties with Israel. Last week Israel reciprocated and asked the Venezuelan ambassador to leave.

Chavez has been an enthusiastic, vocal supporter of Hezbollah, Hamas, Iran and all the other sinister forces intent on eliminating the State of Israel. His open allegiances and brazen rhetoric are an unambiguous invitation – if not actually, too, the directing hand behind – the emboldened hostility towards Jews in Venezuela. Chavez condemned the Shabbat attack on the synagogue, but the statement was seen by most observers as insincere and hollow.

David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee, said on the weekend, "There are strong indications that what we are witnessing is a state-sponsored campaign of anti-Semitic persecution, spurred by both Venezuela's alliance with the Iranian regime and the surge of anti-Israel rhetoric during the recent conflict between Israel and Hamas."

Rabbi Pynchas Brener of Venezuela told the Jerusalem Post that "reason makes us believe that this was done with the consent – if not the instigation – of some central power in Venezuela. I do not know if in this environment there will be a future for the Jewish community here."

With both a trembling stir and the swell of deep outrage in our heart, we note that the attack against the Caracas synagogue is a stark reminiscence of a far darker time in Jewish and world history some 70 years ago in Germany.

We must do all we can to let our fellow Jews in Venezuela know that they are not alone, that we will stand by them and help them should they need our help. And we must also urge the government of Canada to protect the desecration of the Caracas synagogue and the burgeoning culture of hatred towards Jews that inspired it.

25 years ago in The CJN

Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter told a gathering of 1,000 businesspeople in Toronto that Mideast peace would be impossible if Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization don't modify their demands. Israel's refusal to leave occupied territory and give Palestinians self-determination, and the PLO's refusal to recognize Israel, are key roadblocks, he said.

Dry Bones
MODERN TIMES
THE PRESIDENT OF TURKEY EXPLODED IN RAGE OVER ISRAEL'S GAZA OPERATION!
BUT WE DON'T KNOW IF HIS PRO-HAMAS RANTING IS SINCERE . . .
OR BECAUSE HE'S TRYING TO ENDEAR HIMSELF TO . . .
EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION!
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New wave of Venezuelan anti-Semitism

We wish to bring to your attention our great concern over the current situation of the Jewish community of Venezuela.

Historically, the people of Venezuela welcomed with open arms immigrants from everywhere without any expression of xenophobia or racism. All ethnic and religious communities traditionally enjoyed peaceful coexistence at all times, and Venezuela's Jewish community – dating from the days of Simon Bolivar – was no exception.

In the past, as today, several Venezuelan governments have expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian cause or the Palestinian people. However, since the events in Gaza that began on Dec. 27, the present government of Venezuela has adopted an aggressive and dangerous tone never previously heard, clearly inciting hatred against the Jewish community. The government's supporters nationwide picked up on the government's lead with clearly anti-Semitic expressions – with no effort whatsoever by government to stop them. The expulsion of the Israeli ambassador followed, and, subsequently, so did a final breaking off of diplomatic relations.

Dry Bones
KING SOLOMON AND HIS ADVISER
THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE AMERICANS STOPPED . . .
THE IRANIAN WEAPONS SHIP THAT WAS HEADING FOR GAZA!
AND THE BAD NEWS IS ?
THEY DID IT TO STOP US FROM GRABBING IT FIRST!
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Furthermore, there is a well-orchestrated campaign on TV, radio, print and Internet media owned by the government, openly questioning Israel's right to exist, even including publication of such anti-Semitic materials as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. A group of pro-government journalists is urging the population to boycott businesses owned by Jews in Venezuela.

We ask all Jewish communities worldwide to condemn this campaign against our brethren in Venezuela, and to ask their governments, their national and international media to condemn this racism and anti-Semitism in Venezuela, which is setting a dangerous new precedent in Latin America.

Oscar Jaroslavsky, General Secretary
Robert Croitorescu, President
CLAM – Maccabi Latin America Confederation

* * *

Shifting minds

I heartily endorse the letter-writing campaigns to news outlets across the country with online initiatives such as CLIC and Honest Reporting to get Israel's story justly documented ("War for Israel's image is a CLIC away," CJN, Jan. 29). We must counter the negative image of Israel and the toll that image is exacting on Israel and the Jewish citizens in many countries around the world. The fermenting racism and blatant anti-Semitism that we are witnessing is very disturbing. Holding the media accountable for biased reporting should be of paramount importance to any person who is alarmed by the repercussions of the Gaza war.

There are other ways to enlighten people about the situation. I started an e-mail correspondence, explaining the facts clearly and succinctly and covering much ground with good references and arguments. Individual connection has an immediacy and personal component to it. The result has been an expression of much appreciation from those who I have e-mailed, who now have a greater understanding of a complex situation. If you shift but one mind, you have set in motion a creative, alternative way of reaching more Canadians.

Jan Fine
Toronto

* * *

Disproportionate force?

Hamas, like all terrorist organizations, exerts maximum effort to harm its adversary. If it sent only 20 rockets a day across the border, it is because that is all it was capable of doing. If it had the means to fire 2,000 rockets each day, it would have done so, and, if today it possessed the capacity to explode a nuclear device over Tel Aviv, it would not hesitate for one moment to accomplish that task. As far as Hamas is concerned, there is no such thing as an innocent Israeli civilian. At the risk of sounding cynical and uncaring, had the Israeli military used the same maximum effort, Gaza would have ceased to exist long ago and the number of civilian deaths would not be numbered in the hundreds, but in the hundreds of thousands. By this measure, the Israeli response was disproportionately minuscule indeed.

T.R. Simon
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Upset, frightened by CJN column

Jesse Mintz wrote a column for your issue of Jan. 22 about how Israel was wrong in attacking the university in Gaza ("Bombing Gaza university was a bad idea"). It was chilling to read this type of attack against Israel from a Jewish paper when the world of anti-Semites is gathering up forces to try not only to defeat Israel in its puppet world courts and Arab-dominated UN human rights groups, but to try to eliminate Israel from the map. Israel attacked places of terrorist activity during the Gaza war. For comfort and strength, I turn to The CJN, and I find the same kind of propaganda attacking Israel that I have read in other newspapers. It's upsetting, sad and mostly frightening.

Howard Wolle
Toronto

LET THEM GO…

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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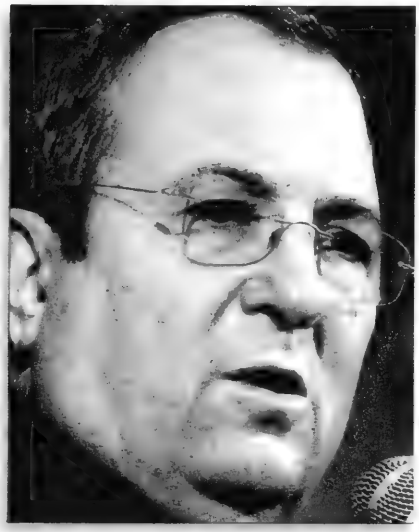
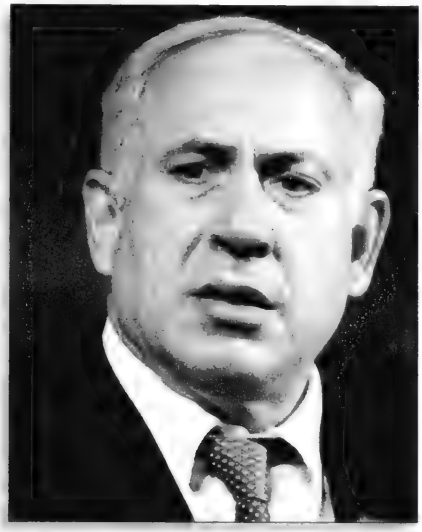




The three main contenders for prime minister of Israel, from left, Labor leader Ehud Barak, Kadima leader Tzipi Livni and Likud chief Benjamin Netanyahu.
[Israel Sun photos]

Israeli election campaign heats up

By MARCY OSTER
JTA

In an election season compressed into just three weeks due to the military operation in Gaza, during which campaigning ground to a virtual halt, Israel's political parties have begun to roll out their campaigns ahead of national elections on Feb. 10.

The first round of publicly sponsored and legally restricted TV advertisements aired during a special hour of political broadcasts last Tuesday night (Jan. 27). Each party was allotted a specific amount of time based on the number of seats it holds in the current Knesset. Due to flagging interest in this year's campaign, Israeli TV channels have declined to air subsequent broadcasts of the ads during prime time.

Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu is the front-runner, with a widening lead over Kadima, the party now in power.

Kadima has been struggling to raise the profile of party leader Tzipi Livni, Israel's foreign minister. Of the heads of the three largest parties, Livni emerged from the Gaza operation with the fewest gains. Labor leader Ehud Barak received an initial boost from the campaign because as defence minister, he was the architect of Operation Cast Lead.

In the days of criticism that followed the fighting's end, Netanyahu and another right-wing leader, Yisrael Beiteinu's Avigdor Leiberman, saw their poll numbers rise as critics asked why Israel didn't finish the job in Gaza by crippling Hamas.

Livni, however, has benefitted neither from the war nor its aftermath. Cast by critics as largely irrelevant to the war, Livni was not helped by her appearance in the United States to sign a co-operation agreement on security at the very moment that Israel announced the Gaza ceasefire.

With Likud having the most to lose in the next two weeks of campaigning, Netanyahu is playing it safe and warning supporters not to presume victory.

"We still have two weeks," the former prime minister said at a Jan. 26 rally. "Even though things look promising, they are not guaranteed."

If he wins, Netanyahu is expected to reach the 61-seat majority in the Knesset needed to become prime mininster by building a coalition with Labor and smaller parties. On Monday afternoon, Likud announced an alliance with the small religious Zionist party Achi, which is headed by Knesset member Effie Eitam, who left the National Religious Party when it refused to bolt former prime minister Ariel Sharon's coalition over the Gaza withdrawal.

Netanyahu has said he favours pursuing achievable incremental agreements with the Palestinians rather than chasing what he sees as an elusive final-status deal for a two-state solution. He has said he wants to focus on bolstering the "moderate parts of the Palestinian economy" to foster the conditions for political agreement.

On Sunday, Netanyahu was quoted as telling Tony Blair, the Middle East envoy of the Quartet grouping of Mideast peace sponsors – the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia – that while he would not build new settlements in the West Bank, he would allow the natural-growth expansion of existing ones.

A former finance minister, Netanyahu is also casting himself as Israel's economic saviour, the man to steer Israel through the choppy waters of the global financial crisis.

On Jan. 27, the Sephardi religious party Shas endorsed Netanyahu for prime minister, albeit with caution.

"A strong Shas will ensure Netanyahu doesn't repeat his mistakes," Shas leader Eli Yishai said.

After winning the Kadima primary last September, Livni refused to strike a coalition deal with Shas, insisting she would not be forced into paying off the party with budget concessions. Supporters hailed her for refusing to give in to blackmail. Critics assailed her for not having the gumption to engage in the political horse-trading necessary to form a governing coalition in Israel.

As for Labor, Barak's wartime boost has sagged as Israel's gains from the war have begun to look more dubious. Hamas' leadership appears to have emerged from the war mostly intact, even though the group's infrastructure in Gaza was destroyed by the Israel Defence Forces. And on Jan. 27, an Israeli soldier was killed by a roadside bomb along the Gaza-Israel border, prompting Israel to resume airstrikes in the strip.

In a bid to shore up support ahead of the election, Labor is targeting the Russian immigrant community. On Jan. 27, the party launched its campaign for Russian speakers, with radio election broadcasts that allude to former Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is viewed favourably by Russian immigrants as a tough leader. Barak garnered 58 per cent of the Russian vote when he won the 1999 election.

Perhaps the biggest winner to emerge from the Gaza war is Lieberman, whose right-wing party has been gaining steadily in the polls.

Lieberman, who immigrated to Israel from Moldova in 1978 and lives in a Jewish settlement in the West Bank, has advocated swapping Arab-populated areas of Israel for West Bank areas populated by Jews. He was most recently embroiled in a verbal tussle with Arab lawmakers over claims that they should not be allowed to run in the elections since they are not loyal to the Jewish state.

In what Lieberman derided as an annual election tradition, police on Sunday arrested seven of his associates, including his daughter, as part of an investigation into allegations of money laundering and fraud. The investigation has been ongoing for three years, but has produced no indictments.

The left-wing Meretz Party, which has steadily lost ground since its high of 12 Knesset seats in 1992, said it will attack Lieberman during the current campaign, according to an internal memo sent to Meretz leaders, Ynet reported Monday. The memo urges the leaders to cast the party as fascistic, comparing Lieberman to far-rightist leaders such as Austria's late Joerg Haider.

The Jewish-Arab Hadash Party also is positioning itself as the anti-Lieberman, with a campaign slogan that reads "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies. Hadash – the opposite of Lieberman." The party, which currently holds three seats in the Knesset, is trying with an Internet-based campaign to attract young, Jewish voters disaffected from other left-wing parties.

Perhaps the most unusual alliance in this year's election is between the Green Leaf Party, which has no seats in the Knesset, and the Pensioners' Party, which has six. Renamed the Holocaust Survivors' and Grown-Up Green Leaf Party, the parties' prime issues are legalizing marijuana and promoting pensioners' rights, especially those of Holocaust survivors. One of the party's TV ads shows party head Gil Kopatch smoking a joint at the grave of Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion.

Opinions

Speaker fabricates history

If someone who believed Israel to be "politically and morally untenable" were invited to speak in your city or on your campus, would you not be concerned? I was.

And if this speaker, one week before he visited your area, had, in another centre, accused Israel of "ethnic cleansing" and "apartheid" practices, would you not be alarmed? I was.

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

And if this person, when addressing a packed auditorium at your university, implied that the Israel Defence Forces had improperly directed highly flammable "white phosphorus" shells at civilians during its Gaza operation – a charge that has been absolutely refuted – would you not be appalled? I was.

And if this individual, during his speech on your campus, insisted that Israel should acknowledge the "right of return" of Palestinians and then accept "a one-state solution" – code, of course for the elimination of the Jewish state – would you not be outraged? I was.

As part of an eight-city Canadian lecture tour, Jeff Halper spoke at McMaster University on Jan. 21. Born and raised in Minnesota, he moved to Israel in 1973. Listing himself as a lecturer in anthropology who was at one time or another on staff at Haifa and Ben-Gurion universities, he is better known as the co-founder and co-ordinator of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. In this capacity, he has been criticized by such organizations as NGO Watch for demonizing Israel and "grossly distorting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

His penchant for twisting facts in order to vilify and delegitimize Israel was very much in evidence during his talk at McMaster. With cunning creativity, he showed slides of Israel and the territories that were deceptively off scale, and he presented population numbers and regional breakdowns that were so aberrant that they were uninterpretable.

But aside from his more obvious calumnies, replete as they were with constant references to Israel as a rogue state that probably ought not to exist, he also steered his diatribe in two directions that were especially abhorrent. Firstly, he charged that the goal of Zionism was, as he put it, to "judaize" Israel (i.e. to erase all presence of Palestinians and Arabs by transfer) – and, in so doing, the "demographic threat could be countered."

Secondly, and even more egregiously, he charged Israel with what he described as "human warehousing," wherein Palestinians are considered what he terms "surplus humanity" that is "to be written off."

That the likes of a Halper should be welcomed on Canadian campuses is unconscionable, and that students and faculty who should know better have given him the time of day is beyond comprehension. The conspiracy theories, deranged assumptions and unsubstantiated claims that are so central to his thesis are inimical to the better interests of rational discourse.

Gaza fallout looms large for next Israeli PM

Few claims were heard here in Israel that the latest operation in Gaza was initiated for political reasons, but now that it's over, it will certainly influence the way people vote in next week's elections.

From September 1992 to November 1994, I was the Israel Defence Forces' legal adviser in the Gaza Strip. It was one of the most exciting and challenging positions that I held during almost a quarter century of service in the IDF's Military Advocate General's Corps.

Yair Lootsteen in Jerusalem

Soon after taking on that position, Israel waged its first major offensive against Hamas, temporarily expelling some 450 terrorists to Lebanon, more than 200 of whom were from Gaza.

Later, from mid-September 1993 until the end of my term, I participated in the negotiations between Israel and the PLO, subsequent to the Oslo accords, at several different venues. I also oversaw the on-the-ground legalities of the first phase of the agreement's implementation – the IDF's initial redeployment in Gaza, when Israeli forces withdrew from all populated Palestinian areas and re-aligned to defend the Gush Katif settlements, as well as the orderly transfer of authority from the Israeli military government to the then-nascent Palestinian Authority.

At the time, I felt I was participating in historic events that might lead to enduring peace with the Palestinians and eventually between Israel and all its neighbours.

During the decade that followed, that dream evaporated. We began experiencing terrible suicide bombings. Critics proclaimed we were just waking from the Oslo nightmare. Prime minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated. Benjamin Netanyahu and then Ehud Barak came to power. While negotiations continued and some further agreements were reached, trust between the sides dissipated.

In 2000, when former U.S. president Bill Clinton couldn't cajole Barak and then-PA president Yasser Arafat to reach an agreement at Camp David on some of the most complex issues left out of Oslo, the second intifadah ensued. Suicide bombings became weekly, sometimes daily, occurrences. Guns we'd allowed the Palestinians were turned against us. Hundreds of people were killed. Qassam rockets from Gaza began falling into the western Negev.

By 2004, the IDF and the new security barrier had quenched most threats coming from the West Bank and had brought normalcy back to Israel's cities.

With this backdrop, Ariel Sharon, who'd replaced Barak as prime minister in 2001, initiated a plan for Israel to unilaterally disengage itself completely from Gaza, in the hope that uprooting all settlements and military facilities and turning the entire region over to the Palestinian Authority would kick-start negotiations between the sides. As an indication of his future intent, Sharon's plan included removing four settlements from the northern West Bank.

We remember the heart-wrenching pictures of settlers being torn from their homes by soldiers and police. They reflected the price that Israel's leadership was willing to pay, both internally and externally, to advance the peace process.

We also remember politicians of all colours who promised that they would react swiftly and powerfully to any subsequent attack from Gaza. Many believed that this threat alone would suffice. As we know, it didn't.

Afterward, the Bush administration pushed for elections in the Palestinian Authority. The results were horrific. Hamas won a majority in the Palestinian Legislative Council. A widening rift developed between Hamas and Fatah, culminating in Hamas' violent takeover of Gaza.

During all this time, Israeli communities near Gaza endured an ongoing barrage of thousands of missiles from Hamas and the like.

Israeli restraint ended with a literal boom on Dec. 27, and the rest is already history. Questions of proportionality, civilian deaths, collateral damage and purported war crimes abound. They will keep politicians, generals, lawyers and diplomats busy in the months ahead. So, too, will the means and methods of preventing further missile attacks, particularly by effectively foiling future smuggling of armaments into Gaza from Egypt.

Next week's election will be held in the shadow of this operation, but it also comes on the heels of a new administration in Washington, one looking for novel solutions to the conflict in this region. Whoever wins the vote, he or she will be tasked with navigating Israel through many turbulent waters, but the first chore will be Gaza.

Our leadership will have to be both resolute and creative in dealing with future relations with Gaza – steadfast when pushed to make concessions not in line with Israel's security interests, but also resourceful in finding solutions that will allow Gazans a semblance of normalcy.

Unfortunately, it will be quite some time before we can start dreaming of peace again.

The BBC takes on Oxfam and CARE

In parallel to the military conflict in Gaza, a fierce political contest is again taking place between the Palestinian and Israeli narratives, and heads of organizations that claim to promote charitable objectives are the generals and lieutenants in this "humanitarian" war. In this context, the BBC – which is generally locked in to the Palestinian narrative – surprised both supporters and critics by rightly rejecting requests to broadcast noble appeals on behalf of the victims in Gaza.

Gerald Steinberg in Jerusalem

While many aid groups are impartial in other areas of the world, the Arab-Israeli conflict creates a highly charged partisan framework that overwhelms the neutrality expected of charitable organizations. Their focus is exclusively on Palestinian victims, while Israeli casualties from more than 800 rocket attacks during this three-week war (after 6,000 such attacks were launched from Gaza in the preceding eight years) have been erased from this biased image.

BBC director general Mark Thompson understood that "humanitarian issues – the suffering and distress of civilians and combatants on both sides of the conflict, the debate about who is responsible for causing it and what should be done about it – are both at the heart of the story and contentious."

In contrast to appeals following natural disasters, such as tsunamis and floods, this is a political disaster, and an appeal for Palestinians alone would "be interpreted as taking a political stance on an ongoing story," Thompson wrote on the BBC's website in explaining the broadcaster's decision not to air the appeal. (Similarly, the BBC does not accept appeals on behalf of aid to one side or another in other areas of political violence, such as Sri Lanka, Georgia or the Balkans.)

Indeed, for many years, many of the groups claiming to promote humanitarian agendas have been important players in the emotive political debate over narratives and responsibility. Moral claims that accuse Israel of horrendous war crimes, and present Palestinians only as victims are used to justify academic and commercial boycotts, and such campaigns are an integral part of the conflict. Their claims of neutrality, morality and apolitical objectives are disingenuous.

NGO Monitor has reported that in the months prior to the decision by Hamas to end the six-month ceasefire and resume rocket attacks, these organizations issued a flood of one-sided denunciations aimed at Israel. This campaign repeated tendentious (and often highly inaccurate) terms such as "collective punishment," violation of international law, etc.

For example, on March 6, 2008, a group including CARE International, Oxfam and Save the Children published a widely quoted report under the headline "The Gaza Strip: A humanitarian implosion." The authors didn't hide their bias, repeating standard Palestinian political rhetoric, including claims that Israeli policy "constitutes a collective punishment against ordinary men, women and children" and is "illegal under international humanitarian law." The report was wrong on many counts, including allegations regarding the availability of food and basic necessities, which were contradicted by World Bank and World Health Organization information. The fact that Hamas chose to pursue war with Israel – including the enormous cost of building thousands of rockets designed to kill – rather than the welfare of its people was a dirty little secret that was never stated in these reports.

During the three-week war, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Oxfam and others were extremely active in the ideological campaign that highlighted Palestinians as victims and Israelis as aggressors. Their press statements included language that reinforced this narrative, demanding that the "international community must not stand aside and allow Israeli leaders to commit massive and disproportionate violence against Gazan civilians in violation of international law." This ideological bias absolves the Hamas leadership for responsibility in the confrontation that they sought and in which they have declared a victory.

In this framework, the Archbishop of Canterbury issued a plea in support of the charities and in opposition to the BBC's position: "By declining their request, the BBC has already taken sides and forsaken impartiality." But common moral sense – which is admittedly in short supply – supports the BBC's position. The aid groups and self-proclaimed guardians of human rights are the ones that have forsaken impartiality and sided with Hamas in its war against Israel.

Egypt's position on Gaza war aroused Arab anger

Egypt – the first Arab country to establish diplomatic relations with Israel – has played a vital role as a mediator in efforts to stabilize Israel's often tense border with the Gaza Strip. Egypt performed this role before and during the recent war, and is doing so again following Israel's withdrawal from Gaza.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

The pro-western Egyptian government was instrumental in persuading Israel and Hamas – which violently seized Gaza from the rival Fatah movement in June 2007 – to agree to a six-month ceasefire last summer. Egypt's negotiator, Omar Suleiman, warned Hamas that it risked an Israeli invasion if the truce collapsed.

When Hamas declined to renew the shaky truce unless Israel reopened its border crossings and lifted its economic blockade, Israel's foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, conferred with President Hosni Mubarak, warning him that Israel could no longer tolerate the Hamas rocket and mortar barrages.

Wilfully ignoring the writing on the wall, Hamas stepped up its bombardment of Israeli communities adjacent to Gaza, provoking Israel to launch Operation Cast Lead on Dec. 27. The first phase took the form of massive air attacks against Hamas' military and political infrastructure, while the second resulted in a long-postponed ground invasion.

With a full-scale war raging, Egypt, in concert with France, conveyed a truce proposal to the combatants under which Israel and Hamas would abide by an immediate short-term ceasefire and the border crossings would be opened for humanitarian aid. In the interval, Egypt would work for a more durable ceasefire.

Egypt's proposal was still-born.

Hamas would not accept a truce unless Israel pulled its army out of Gaza immediately. Israel insisted that border crossings could not be opened until an agreement was reached on suppressing arms smuggling and preventing Hamas from rearming. Israel also insisted that Gilad Shalit – an Israeli soldier kidnapped by Hamas in June 2006 – would have to be released from captivity.

These disagreements were exacerbated by Egypt's objection to stationing an international peacekeeping force on its side of the border with Gaza.

Given the impasse, Israel declared a unilateral ceasefire on Jan. 18, while Hamas followed suit 12 hours later.

Although both sides bypassed Egypt by declaring separate truces, they remain dependent on Egyptian goodwill and diplomacy.

No sooner had the three-week war ended than Egypt invited representatives from Israel and Hamas for ceasefire talks in Cairo.

Israel is seeking a stable truce that will be underpinned by a new mechanism to stop arms smuggling from Egypt through tunnels along the Philadelphi Corridor.

This is of the utmost importance to Israel. Before Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, Hamas smuggled several tons of arms and munitions, mainly from Iran, into Gaza every year. Once Hamas gained control of Gaza in its showdown with Fatah, the figure rose to 100 tons per annum.

During the recent war, Israeli aircraft destroyed a great many of the tunnels, but Palestinians began to rebuild them once the Israeli army pulled out of Gaza.

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni meets Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo on the eve of the war in Gaza. [Amos Ben Gershom GPO Flash 90]

Egypt has promised to crack down on arms smuggling, if only out of self-interest. The Egyptians are wary of Hamas' Islamic radicalism and fear that its links with Egypt's homegrown Muslim Brotherhood are subversive.

Israel appreciates Egypt's promise, but is skeptical about whether Cairo will follow through. Israel has not forgotten that Egypt's prewar record of interdicting the flow of military equipment from the Sinai Peninsula into Gaza was less than satisfactory and, indeed, a source of tension between the two countries.

According to reports, Israel has taken a favourable view of Egypt's request to increase its border patrol force from 750 to 2,250 troops. Israel's chief negotiator, Amos Gilad, has reportedly discussed this issue with Suleiman, but by last week, it was far from resolved.

Some Israeli observers, such as Bar-Ilan University scholars Efraim Inbar and Mordechai Kedar, have yet to be convinced that Egypt – which occupied Gaza from 1949 to 1967 and maintains correct but cool relations with Israel– is sincerely interested in ending weapons smuggling across its porous border.

As they put it, "Israel would be foolish to expect that the Egyptians will act decisively and significantly… An important implication of this reality is that we must maintain freedom of action to bomb tunnels along the Philadelphi Corridor, or recapture it."

Egypt's sincerity on arms smuggling may be questionable, but observers generally agree that Egypt adopted a fairly balanced policy during the war in Gaza.

Just as Egypt blamed Hezbollah for igniting the 2006 war in Lebanon, so Egypt held Hamas responsible for starting the fighting in Gaza. Mubarak condemned Israel for its "savage aggression," yet refused to break ties with Israel, as Qatar, Mauritania, Venezuela and Bolivia did.

When the war erupted, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Gheit lashed out at Hamas, saying it had foolishly ignored warnings to cease its rocket and mortar fire at Israel.

The National Democratic Party – which has ruled Egypt for decades in an authoritarian fashion – denounced Hamas, accusing it of flouting Egypt's advice to maintain the truce with Israel.

"Instead, Hamas dealt with the situation in a spirit of adventurism and irresponsibility, without taking into account the consequences of its positions," the party said in a blistering communique.

Al-Ahram, the Egyptian newspaper, took a similarly tough line in an editorial. Lambasting Hamas and likening Israel to a wolf, Al-Ahram thundered,"If you can't kill the wolf, don't pull its tail."

As expected, Egypt's anti-Hamas rhetoric was denounced throughout the Arab world, in Iran and in Egypt itself.

The secretary general of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, called on Egyptians to take to the streets. Iran protested vehemently. In Aden, Yemeni protesters stormed the Egyptian consulate in a show of anger.

Thousands of Egyptians took part in demonstrations, but they were kept in check by the police. Having seen photographs in newspapers and images on television of Mubarak shaking hands with Livni on the eve of the war, they were incensed by the belief that Egypt was complicit in Israel's offensive and was eager to inflict heavy blows on Hamas.

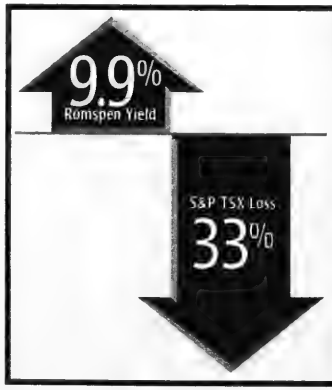
Cairo's decision to keep its Rafah border crossing with Gaza virtually closed was also controversial. It aroused widespread indignation and was largely regarded as an unfriendly act abetting Israel's siege of Gaza. Israel imposed the blockade after Hamas' victory in the 2006 parliamentary elections in the Palestinian territories.

The president of Syria, Bashar Assad, urged Egypt to open the crossing, but aside from allowing a trickle of wounded Palestinians to enter, Egypt kept it firmly shut.

Mubarak announced that the crossing would not be fully opened unless the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, was fully in charge of it on the Gaza side. Fearing the spectre of Islamic fundamentalism, which convulsed Egypt in the 1990s, the Egyptian regime has consistently supported Fatah in its struggle with Hamas.

Egypt's position is reflective of deep-seated fissures in the Muslim world.

During Israel's offensive, Egypt and its allies, notably Jordan and Saudi Arabia, were critical of Hamas. But Syria and Iran, which have supplied Hamas with arms and training, backed it to the hilt.



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'Defiant' survivor recounts his tale

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

The recently released Hollywood film Defiance tells the tale of three Polish Jewish brothers who grimly shepherded nearly 1,200 survivors through the woods of Poland, eking out a meagre survival and living with a kill-or-be-killed determination in the face of the Nazi extermination machine.

The film and story were reviewed in The CJN Jan. 1.

Today, Tuvia, Zus and Asael Bielski – the brothers in question – are still heroes to the few remaining survivors who lived through the Holocaust because of the brothers' partisan activities.

Though the survivor generation's numbers are dwindling, there are still those who remember their lot under the Bielskis' protection. One of them is Simon Zelcovitch.

In Toronto, Zelcovitch told The CJN how he, his sister Gittel and his parents were all saved by fleeing into the Bielski-patrolled woods from their ghetto home in Lida, Belarus, at the urgent behest of his older brother, Yossele, who had previously joined with the Bielskis and begun working with the Soviet partisans, impersonating a Nazi to scavenge food for Jews. He was eventually killed in a crossfire shortly after saving his and 40 other Jewish families.

Now 71, Zelcovitch was only four years old when he first set foot in the Bielskis' woodland refuge, but his inner child's trauma, imagery and memories remain intact.

"My experience – and I didn't realize this until much later – was that my childhood had been stolen from me," he said, a sullen look crossing his face. "When I wanted to laugh or cry… I [learned] that I couldn't because I could cause death. So my emotions had to be suppressed completely. I had to be an adult, I could no longer be a child."

Recounting story after story about his family's survival methods among the Bielskis' flock, Zelcovitch fought back tears. And he bristled at reviews and comments in the Polish press following the release of Defiance that suggested the Bielskis were the real menace in the woods, and not the Germans.

"I'm essentially a nice guy, with a very brutal force in me, for obvious reasons," he said, referring to the way he's dealt with anti-Semites during his lifetime.

"I've been taught that first you try to speak intelligently to someone and then allow them to speak in turn," he said. "And if you can't get anything across and they keep spewing out venom, you beat the s–t out of them. Then they become more placid and understanding. That's been my experience, as terrible as this may sound."

He attended Defiance's preview in Toronto last month at the invitation of director Ed Zwick, and although Zelcovitch never personally met the Bielskis during his time in the woods, he said he thought Zwick "did not dramatize anything, though it may seem so to some people. It was very accurate."

Simon Zelcovitch

Speaking to The CJN from Winnipeg, Jewish historian and author Allan Levine, thought the movie "was done very well," though he noted that Zwick played around with the timing of some of the actual events in order to make it all fit.

Levine, who wrote about some of these events in his 1998 book Fugitives in the Forest – reissued late last year and updated with additional information to coincide with Defiance's release – cited both Gittel and Simon Zelcovitch as inspirations for the book.

Levine said the movie has reopened the question of why more Jews didn't fight back against the Nazis.

"Jews were trapped in the ghetto, and early on, no one believed the stories of people being marched to death pits. Who would believe that?" he asked rhetorically. "The main thing was that nobody really understood that the ghetto was not meant to be a permanent solution. Running away and hiding in a forest… seemed far-fetched."

Of the few "happy" moments Zelcovitch experienced in the woods, one has stayed with him as a ritual to this day: stopping to watch the rain.

"I love heavy rain. Because we used to run away from the Nazis' dogs for days so they'd lose our scents," he recalled through tears. "One day, an extreme downpour came, and my sister and I found some shelter beneath an old wagon on a little knoll. As we lay there, breathing easier, I realized it was the first time in a long while that I had some rest and I didn't have to run and be frightened to death anymore."

Zelcovitch said he's instructed his wife and children to wake or alert him, day or night, any time there's a rainstorm. Then he'll go sit on his porch and watch it pour, so he can feel at peace.

The Zelcovitches were liberated from their forest hideaway by a Soviet tank division in 1944.

One day, "a tank came crashing through the woods and came to rest in front of us," Zelcovitch said. "The cockpit opened and out came, what to me seemed the most handsome man, wearing a captain's uniform. He was a Russian Jew and he said to us, '*Menschen! Heint zeit yo frei!*' ('Today you are free!')"

Simon and his family walked out of the woods and returned to Lida, only to go on the run again, this time from the threat of living under Communist Russia and its stifling lifestyle. They made their way to West Germany, and in 1948, they were sponsored by cousins to come to Winnipeg.

Once in the freedom of Canada, Zelcovitch said he tried to catch up with his youth and had to relearn when it was appropriate to laugh or cry.

He said he experienced a "desperate need to fit in" and began to study English to blend in with his new environment. His love of the language eventually led him to move to Toronto, where he worked as an advertising executive for more than 30 years.

"I did a lot of writing to release emotions," he said.

Today, he is a semi-retired graphologist – someone who analyzes handwriting – a hobby that turned into a job and something he's done for the past 40 years.

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IGTO poster contest focuses on Tel Aviv

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The Israel Government Tourist Office – Canada (IGTO) is sponsoring a "Big Draw" postcard design contest for students at Jewish schools in the GTA to celebrate Tel Aviv's centennial year. The grand prize winner will receive two El Al tickets to Israel.

Oded Grofman, the tourism consul and a third-generation Tel Aviv resident, told The CJN that the contest is "a good opportunity" to bring something creative to the young generation as well as to provide incentive for them to learn about the history of Tel Aviv.

From a tourism perspective, children are often the "trigger" for a family trip to Israel, whether it's a bar mitzvah trip or a vacation spurred by students' interest in seeing first hand what they are learning about in their Jewish schools, Grofman said.

Tel Aviv is a vibrant, diverse city with much to offer visitors, Grofman said, citing its nightlife, restaurants, beach, promenade, museum, opera, concerts and theatre.

As well, he noted, in 2003 it was named a UNESCO World Heritage site for its Bauhaus architecture.

"There's something to do every minute there," said Grofman.

Participating schools are holding their own postcard contests and will select five entries each to submit to the IGTO.

As of last week, about two dozen schools – of which about 60 per cent are day schools – were involved in the contest, according to Jerry Adler, the IGTO's manager of marketing and public relations.

On March 16, a panel of judges will choose three winners, basing their decisions on content, esthetic appeal and effectiveness of delivering a message, said Adler.

Runners-up will receive a digital camera (second prize) and an MP3 player (third prize).

The winning design may be used for tourism promotion, and could be printed as soon as April, when celebratory events begin in Israel for Tel Aviv's centennial year. They will run through 2009.

In 2008, 71,000 Canadians visited Israel, a record, bettering the previous year's tally of just over 60,000, which was also a record, Adler said.

More information about the centennial is available at www.tlv100.co.il.

For more information on Israel, go to goisrael.ca.

BIRTHDAY ANGELS: **Children at Netivot HaTorah Day School's Gan Netivot supported the Weizmann Institute Birthday Angels program. Each class collected toonies and sponsored birthday parties for children in Israel. Picture, with Joan Pollack of the Weizmann Institute, are Lily B. and Avi D.**
[*Rebecca Ansel photo*]

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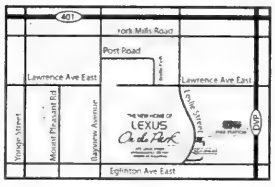

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Torontonians head to Southern Israel to show their solidarity

Mission travels to Sderot, Be'ersheva

By Daniel Horowitz

Four members of Toronto's Jewish community recently shared an experience that none of them is likely to forget. Peter Ekstein, Brad Fox, and Lorrie Kushnir joined UJA's Jeff Springer aboard an intense, whirlwind mission to Southern Israel.

The Toronto foursome split their time between Sderot and Be'er Sheva.

"My personal goal on this mission was to meet as many people living in the south as humanly possible," explained Ekstein. "These people have been living in unimaginable conditions for years now, and I wanted to let them know that we represent a huge community of 200,000 Jewish Torontonians who love them, stand with them, and that we're all part of the same family."

And, according to Ekstein, his goal was met, as mission participants spent time with Israelis ranging from teachers and students to mayors and business owners. At one point, the visitors received a first-hand, all-too-real look at what life is like for Southern Israelis.

Participants of UJA Federation's recent solidarity mission to Southern Israel, Lorri Kushnir (standing, second from left); Brad Fox (kneeling, left); Jeff Springer (kneeling, centre); and Peter Ekstein, (far right) spent time in the extreme sports facility in Sderot. The facility is funded by UJA Federation.

During their time in Be'ersheva, alarms sounded, signaling incoming missiles being fired by Hamas terrorists in nearby Gaza. The Torontonians had thirty seconds to find cover.

"Just as I had settled into our van in Be'ersheva, the code red sounded, and I had thirty seconds to make it to a bomb shelter," recounted Kushnir. "They teach you what to do in case it happens, but once it actually did, I felt like a deer caught in the headlights. My feet wouldn't move; my legs felt as though they each weighed a thousand pounds. Finally, we made our way to the bomb shelter, and that was that. But, it made me realize how Israelis live like this every day, often several times a day. I had visited Israeli bomb shelters before on tours, but believe me; the experience is unreal when your life is at stake."

"One of the most powerful moments of the mission for me was when we met a 39-year-old mother whose home had been hit by a rocket," said Fox. "She was so shaken, unable to release the grip that the fear had on her. Her anxiety about her children's safety took a heavy toll on her face. We also spent time in bomb shelters, where children are forced to spend a good deal of their days and nights, and where they are receiving counseling and are offered recreational activities."

"It was significant that we spent our time meeting with the people affected by the war and not just with government officials," said Springer, Chief, Corporate Operations, UJA Federation. "We had a unique opportunity to gain a grassroots understanding, from young and old, of the impact of the rockets.

To donate to UJA's Southern Israel Relief Fund - which is providing financial assistance through UIA Federations Canada for social welfare projects in southern Israel - visit ujadonations.com/southisrael.

Jewish Toronto gears up for Inclusive Action Week

According to the provincial government, over 15 per cent of Ontario's population has a disability, and that number is destined to rise as the population ages.

In an effort to raise the profile of inclusion throughout the Greater Toronto Area, UJA Federation's Board of Directors recently endorsed Inclusion Action Week, an unprecedented community initiative occurring in conjunction with a number of Jewish communities across North America.

Inclusion Action Week – chaired by David Green and Daphne Wagner - will take place from February 19 to February 26 across the GTA, and will include a number of special programs including Shabbat Itanu – a Shabbat of Inclusion - Community Inclusion Awards of Excellence, and a Brunch and Film event.

The goal of the week is to promote full participation in Jewish life for people with disabilities and their families within Toronto's Jewish community while increasing community awareness of the needs and concerns of people with disabilities.

"Making our city fully accessible to those with disabilities is absolutely vital, and one of UJA Federation's priorities," said David Koschitzky, Chair, UJA Federation. "One of our most important Jewish values is that of taking care of one another, and this special initiative will hopefully motivate community organizations to take action and to encourage the creation and implementation of inclusive programs and activities throughout the Jewish community as the norm, rather than the exception."

Stan Kugelmass (l), with The Honourable David C. Onley, O.Ont., Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, at last year's Inclusion Awards of Excellence presentations.

Toronto will be joining Jewish communities in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Philadelphia, New York and others.

"Our mandate is to lead and encourage full participation in Jewish life for people with disabilities and their families in order to truly make our Jewish community inclusive. We want to raise awareness, change attitudes and remove barriers," said Fay Rotman, director, Itanu Toronto. "That means promoting an environment where people with special needs are able to fully participate in educational, spiritual, communal, social and recreational activities."

"This is the first community-wide effort to focus attention on inclusion as a fundamental principle of Jewish communal life in Toronto," explained Stan Kugelmass, chair, Itanu Toronto. "Like many Jewish communities, there is wide spread support for inclusion in the GTA, but often a lack of tangible action. We are committed to moving from words to action."

For more information about Inclusion Action Week, visit www.itanutoronto.com, contact 416.924.6211 Ext. 255, or email inclusionuja@mnjcc.org

David Cynamon briefed by Israeli President

On a recent trip to Israel to show his solidarity with the Jewish State and to attend the opening ceremonies of his family's latest philanthropic project - a new school in a kibbutz named Ravid in Northern Israel - Toronto's David Cynamon was invited to a private briefing by Israeli President Shimon Peres at his official residence.

Survivor's daughter visits father's school in Germany

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

When Susan Liebel received an e-mail in early 2008 from Ernst Kuhnle, a schoolteacher in Esslingen, Germany, asking about her late father, George Liebel – a Holocaust survivor who fled Germany in 1939 – she thought it was a hoax.

Investigating further, Susan Liebel, 54, a teacher at Thornhill's Willowbrook Public School, discovered that Kuhnle's e-mail was legitimate, and the message was actually an act of outreach by her father's former high school, the Georgii Gymnasium, which he attended from 1927 to 1936.

According to Liebel, he was the only Jew at the school during that period.

"My parents weren't very religious, and they were very assimilated. They spoke no Yiddish, and German was their mother tongue," she said.

After corresponding with the school and exchanging stories and information about her father, Liebel and her family were invited to Esslingen last September to attend a commemoration ceremony – titled "He Was One of Us" – for her father, which included the laying down of a brass *stolperstein* (block) inscribed with his name in front of the school.

Though her mother was unable to make the trip, Liebel travelled with her husband, Gabor Herczeg, and her cousin, Carie Lemack.

George Liebel, who was a chemist, died of a heart attack in 1981 at age 64.

Stolpersteine have been used since the early 1990s in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Hungary to "remind people of those who were deported, killed or fled Nazi Germany," Susan told The CJN in an interview late last year.

Once in Esslingen, she learned that the school had done an in-depth investigation into her father's history and had commissioned the *stolperstein* at its own cost.

It had also commissioned two other *stolpersteine*, one for her still-living aunt and one to be laid in front of her grandparents' old home in the town.

Those gestures of kindness and the subsequent trip to Germany last year have left her with many memories and emotions she's still working through, Liebel said.

The town "only had a population of 200 Jews... who were very assimilated," she said. "But by 1932, my father was already marked as 'not Aryan' on his report cards. In 1936, the school's headmaster decided my father would not graduate because he was Jewish. But his classmates spoke out on his behalf and he did graduate."

He then attended the Stuttgart Technical Institute from 1936 to 1938, but after Kristallnacht, he was prevented from continuing his pursuit of a chem-istry degree at the institute.

George Liebel, in September 1940, Quebec City, aged 24.
[*Susan Liebel photo*]

Liebel said she was astounded at how much information still existed about her father in Esslingen, including old report cards and copies of his wage cards from the Daimler factory – the company he worked for in the 1920s – and from senior residents of Esslingen who were once classmates of his.

Her three-day "action-packed" excursion to the town unveiled a surfeit of emotions and details about her father for which she hadn't planned.

"I was born in Montreal, so I was pretty far removed from the old country," Liebel said, adding that her father moved the family to Toronto in 1971 after the October Crisis in Quebec.

"I had mixed feelings and emotions about being there... seeing where he lived, where he studied, played sports. It was overwhelming," she said. "I told the [Esslingen] children that it's very important not to forget, but that it's also important not to harbour negative feelings, either. It's important to remember history and also be accepting of change."

Liebel said she also preaches the same message at Willowbrook school, where she teaches a unit on the Holocaust to grades 7 and 8 students.

"My father eventually was rounded up in 1940 in England, sent to the Isle of Mann as an enemy alien and then shipped out to [Quebec's] Eastern Townships and interned there for two years," she said, adding that he became the leader of the interns at a prisoner-of-war camp in Farnham, Que., where he initiated a hunger strike to secure better food and conditions for the prisoners. He also fought to have the term "PoW" removed from all the prisoners' files.

Once released, he settled down in Montreal, met his wife, Greta, and started a family.

"The Shoah wasn't talked about a lot in my home. But I've learned from this trip and now tell my students to ask questions of their parents and grandparents when they can, because I now regret not having asked and missing out on [answers] all these years," Liebel said.

THE LEO BAECK DAY SCHOOL
announces the appointment of
ERIC PETERSIEL, RJE
as Head of School, effective July 1, 2009

The Board of Directors of The Leo Baeck Day School is pleased to announce the completion of its comprehensive search for a new Head of School. Eric Petersiel, current Principal of Leo Baeck's South Campus, will take up the post on July 1, 2009, succeeding Interim Director Dennis H. Grubbs.

In 2001, Eric joined The Leo Baeck Day School in the role of Vice Principal of Hebrew and Judaic Studies. In 2002 he was appointed South Campus Principal. Much of the dramatic growth of that campus's enrollment and reputation can be attributed to Eric's vision and leadership.

Eric holds a BA from McGill University and a B.Ed and MA from the University of Toronto; he also holds the title of Reform Jewish Educator (RJE). He lives in Toronto with his wife, attorney Tami Moscoe, and their daughter, Lilah.

The Leo Baeck Day School is the only Reform Jewish day school in Canada and the largest in North America. It is the only Jewish day school in North America to be an International Baccalaureate Candidate School. Founded in 1974, the school operates on two parallel campuses which together serve over 850 students in Nursery through Grade 8.

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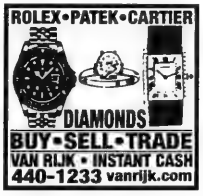

Reuters shines light on Iran's role

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

A Jan. 28 report from the Reuters news service, titled "Egypt attacks Iran and allies in Arab world," looked at a critical but under-reported development in the Arab world: the growing schism between "radical" players aligned with Iran and "moderate" forces aligned with Egypt.

The Western media tend to focus primarily on Israeli-Palestinian developments, missing many broader stories of what is happening in the region as a whole. To be sure, in one respect, the camera's lens has opened onto countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, insufficient attention has been paid to the role of Iran as an instigator of conflict with Israel through its use of Hamas as a proxy.

The Reuters report (although not picked up in the Canadian media at the time of writing) provided the context.

It began: "Egypt aired its grievances against Iran, the Palestinian movement Hamas and the Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah, saying they worked together in the fighting over Gaza to provoke conflict in the Middle East."

Reuters cited remarks by Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit that these parties tried "to turn the region to confrontation in the interest of Iran, which is trying to use its cards to escape western pressure… on the nuclear file."

The story continued: "Aboul Gheit also said that Egypt undermined Qatar's attempts to arrange a formal Arab summit on Gaza earlier this month, arguing that it would have damaged 'joint Arab action.'

"'Egypt made the summit fail… This summit, if it had taken place as an Arab summit with a proper quorum, would have damaged joint Arab action. We can see what others do not see,' he said."

The Reuters report explained: "The wrangling reflected deep divisions between Arab governments. On one side Saudi Arabia and Egypt, wary of the Islamist group Hamas in Gaza, favoured discussing Gaza at a separate economic summit in Kuwait a few days later.

"Diplomats say Egypt resents the Qatari challenge to its traditional role as leading Arab mediator and dislikes the influence of the satellite [news] television channel Al-Jazeera, which is based in Doha and owned by the Qatari government."

One reason that important regional developments are often missing in media reports is that almost all foreign correspondents – hundreds of them – are based, comfortably, in Israel. They often have difficulty getting permission to report from some Arab and Muslim countries, especially Syria and Iran.

And when journalists do manage to enter such authoritarian regimes, their reports tend to be far less critical than when reporting from Israel. Intimidation and being accompanied by "minders" are some factors that can influence coverage.

But nothing prevents an editor in Canada from recognizing the significance of a news service story, such as this Reuters report, and choosing to run it.

Currently, when western journalists visit Gaza, Hamas gives them limited access to the smuggling tunnels, in order to show how Gazans are struggling to import food and other supplies. Occasionally, weapons smuggling is mentioned. Were more attention given to Iran's role, reporters might try harder to investigate exactly how arms from Iran are being shipped into Egypt and smuggled into Gaza.

Another story that deserves attention is the ongoing internecine conflict in Gaza between Hamas and Fatah. Israeli journalists Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff wrote in Ha'aretz (Jan. 29) that "[d]uring the recent fighting, and following it as well, Hamas executed several dozen civilians. Some of those killed were members of rival Fatah, but others were not politically affiliated." But the problem for foreign correspondents who get into Gaza is finding people who are willing – or able – to speak about such matters.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Mutual respect key when kids become observant

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The phenomenon of Jewish children becoming more religiously observant than their parents can be stressful, but issues can be overcome with mutual respect, says Rabbi Philip Scheim.

His talk drew on his experience with congregants at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Congregation, where he has been senior rabbi for more than 25 years, and on his own background growing up in the Reform movement before starting to attend Orthodox services and classes and take on greater ritual observance in his teens.

Speaking at Beth David, which is affiliated with the Conservative movement, for a Jan. 13 sisterhood program, Rabbi Scheim shared his thoughts on the extent to which newly religious children are justified in what they request of their parents, and the extent to which they have to "according to our tradition, show a certain amount of compromise."

Honouring one's father and mother is "clearly... a primary mitzvah," Rabbi Scheim said. However, he added, if a parent requests that a child contravene a mitzvah that honours God, such as eating non-kosher food or driving on Shabbat, the child has the right to say no, as long as the refusal is polite and respectful.

"What's clear is that a child of any age is not expected to violate one of the mitzvot of the Torah."

A recurring issue he has seen is the refusal of a newly "super religious" relative to attend a simchah in a non-Orthodox environment.

He defended the right of family members not to pray in an environment that is outside of their comfort zone, for example, in a synagogue where a microphone is used on Shabbat.

Having found himself in similar situations, he believes that the need to honour family "far" outweighs the lack of comfort.

His own solution has been to "quietly daven before" attending an event in a Reform congregation.

Newly Orthodox family members who "reject... any kind of rapprochement with modernity" constitute "a small number, but [the situation] is quite dramatic," said Rabbi Scheim.

On occasion, when funerals have been held at Beth David, haredi relatives have stood in the parking lot rather than entering the shul, Rabbi Scheim said. Others have not attended weddings.

But, he asserted, there is no halachic reason for either decision. "It's ill-mannered, disrespectful and often very hurtful to families.

"I've seen enough examples of knowledgeable, frum people who will make a point of attending."

An anonymous questioner, using pen and paper provided for those who wanted privacy, asked if a child was "going too far" by asking that the fridge light be taped shut on Shabbat.

"I don't think it's going too far," Rabbi Scheim said. "You can still see what's in the refrigerator."

In his own case, his parents made their kitchen completely kosher for him, although he said he did not expect that. He was prepared to set up his own "mini-kitchen" or use disposable dishes.

"There needs to be some give and take on both sides.... It's very doable."

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JNF Canada helps restore ancient Galilee synagogue

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

THE BIRYA FOREST, Israel – The ruins of an ancient synagogue in the Galilee, one of the earliest to have been discovered, have been excavated and restored in a joint project undertaken by the Jewish National Fund of Canada and the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Standing stolidly in a quiet forest clearing on the slope of a mountain north of Safed and close to Rosh Pina, the synagogue was originally built in the village of Nevoraya after the Bar Kochba Revolt (132-135 CE).

Believed to have been destroyed by an earthquake in 363 CE, it was rebuilt in 564 CE, as indicated by an inscription found at the site.

By all accounts, the synagogue continued to be in use until the eighth century.

More than 30 ancient synagogues have been discovered in the Galilee, according to the JNF.

Constructed during the Roman and Byzantine periods, they share a number of common features, including a rectangular design, interior columns and mosaic floors.

Despite the biblical injunction forbidding imagery, these buildings were decorated with figurative art portraying humans and animals.

French and German scholars in the 19th and early 20th centuries were the first to find the ruins of the Nevoraya synagogue.

Two American archeologists, Eric and Carole Meyers, conducted further excavations in 1980 and 1981.

In preparing the synagogue for viewing, the JNF constructed a gravel courtyard within the interior of the synagogue, a 60-metre path to the site, explanatory signs, ramps for disabled tourists and a parking lot for cars and buses.

Future development plans call for the restoration of the stone mezuzah and the holy ark, and the rebuilding of the walls.

Picnic tables will be placed in an adjacent forest grove.

* * *

In another JNF Canada project, the farmers of Kibbutz Mishmar HaYarden are irrigating their fruit orchards with recycled water from a wastewater reservoir.

Since Israel is already using 99 per cent of of its available water resources, recycled waste water is a necessity.

The reservoir has a capacity of 120,000 cubic metres, all taken from treated effluent generated by the kibbutz.

The water is used to irrigate apple, pear and nectarine orchards, as well as pomegranate shrubs.

To see photos, please go to www.cjnews.com

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ש'שאר י'נ'ע

גידי קורן וחברים

התיאטרון שלנו

רבים מכם נכחו בהצגת הבכורה ההיסטורית של התיאטרון הקהילתי שלנו, מיסודה ובזימויה של יעל פיינגולד. לפחות אחת מספר לא הצליח להכנס כי הכרטיסים נמכרו כולם שבועות מראש. קרוב לודאי שאפשר היה למלא עוד שלוש או ארבע הצגות של "עיר הנפט" שזכתה לבקורות נלהבות ביותר של הקהל.

הרבה מדברים אצלנו על הצורך לבנות רוח של קהילה שהיא מעבר להתייצבות להופעות של אמנים ישראלים שמבקרים כאן. התיאטרון החדש עשה זאת בגדול. הוא איחד קהילה שלמה בהתלהבות, באנרגיה חיובית ובתכנים ישראליים. יד על הלב- שמענו מעסקנים ישראלים הרבה על תכניות, רשימות, התלכדות ומה לא, אבל חוץ מכתרות בעיתונים- כמעט כלום. וכמו בספרים- את הפעילות האמיתית עשו אנשים שאינם בכתרות וששותפים את הכותרות. בראש ובראשונה- תמי ברמן, גוש אנרגיה צונע ותבונה לכלים, שאינה מבזבזת מילה מיותרת-רק עושה ולא מצפה לתודה. לידה ליאורה כ"א, גם היא בטוריה דראצקל בלתי מתלכלת, שעושה ולא מדברת. ולידן גליה סרטר, שמשלימה את יחידת הקומנדו הזאת ועושה ללא ליאות למען הקהילה שלנו. השלישיה הזאת פיתחה את יעל פיינגולד המנוטראלית לבלות חדשים ארוכים בטורונטו ולחולל את נס התיאטרון.

כשהייתי בחורה של הלהקה התרשמתי עמוקות מאחידת הצוות והחדוה שאחזה באנשים הנחמדים האלה-אני מתאר לעצמי שלאחר רדת המסך הם יסבלו מסינדרום נמילה רציני, שאפשר לרפא אותו רק בדרך אחת- הפקה נוספת.

אבל כדי שזה יקרה-צריך למצוא דרך כלכלית אורוכת טווח להביא הנה את פיינגולד שלא רק על בסיס של התנדבות והקרבה שלה. צריך לקוות שהעסקנים שמרכים לדבר ולהתלהם ימצאו דרך לעשות זאת. ובאותה מידה-לא יקרה כלום אם אנחנו, כקהילה חזק, נשמע ובועטת, נחרוג מהרגליו המנוסים של אגרוף קפוץ, ונתמוך בתיאטרון שלנו.

אבל שישאר בינינו.

על מקומה של האשה

תודה לרחמי יומר על דברי החכמה הבאים:

"כל מה שתיתן לאשה-היא תהפוך לגדול יותר.
תיתן לה זרע-היא תיתן לך תינוק,
תיתן לה דירה-היא תהפוך אותה לבית חם,
תיתן לה מצרכים-היא תהפוך אותם לארוחה,
תיתן לה חיוך והיא תיתן לך את ליבה,
בקיצור-היא תכפיל ותעצים כל מה שתיתן לה.
ולכן אל לך להתפלא....
שאם תתייחס אליה כמו לזבל- תקבל ממנה טון של חרא

מה יהיה

אובמה משרה על העולם אנרגיה חיובית לפתיחה של שנה חדשה, כשהמצב הכלכלי כל כך חמור, וכשאין נראה באופק מוצא לבעיית הטרור העולמי והמוסלמי (שהם היינו הך), מישהו הסיכ את תשומת לבי למשמעות המדהימה של סיסמתו המנצחת של אובאמה: "Yes we can"

שימו לב: "יס", באנגלית זה oui בצרפתית, זה "כך" בעבריה-כלומר אנרגיה חיובית של "כך" בכל השפות.

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Jewish Life

Dating lessons from the Red Sea

By RABBI AVROHOM JACKS

At a cocktail party, one woman said to another, "Aren't you wearing your wedding ring on the wrong finger?"

The other replied, "Yes, I am, and it's because I married the wrong man!"

The Talmud makes an astonishing statement about God. The Talmud relates that for God to bring two individuals together in marriage is as "difficult" for Him as the miracle of splitting the Red Sea, mentioned in this week's Torah portion.

Why is God's "effort" to help a person find and marry the "Right One" compared to the particular miracle of splitting the Red Sea?

There are many beautiful commentaries that discuss the reason for this comparison and the lessons that we can learn from it.

My favourite explanation for the link between the crossing of the Red Sea and matrimony requires two brief introductions. These introductions, when understood properly, radically change the way most of us perceive the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea.

Firstly, many of us mistakenly think that the Jewish People crossed the Red Sea. We picture the Jews beginning on one side of the sea and traversing the water until they reached the opposite side.

A quick study of a map of the region will show that the Jews could not have crossed the sea at all. Their journey took them from the area of Goshen, where they lived during the Egyptian exile, and their goal was to end up at the foot of Mount Sinai, where they would receive the Torah. Both their departure and destination are on the same side of the Red Sea! This implies that they must have entered the sea and exited on the same shore.

Now, picture the path that they would have taken. Since they entered and exited the same bank of the Red Sea, their journey would lead them in a semi-circular arc through the sea.

The second point that we need to explore together is a fascinating midrash that relates how each of the 12 tribes walked along its own pathway. This means that some tribes moved more on the inside of the semi-circular path, while others travelled on the outer edge. Elementary geometry explains that those on the inner edge of the circle were in the sea for a shorter period of time than those on the outer circles, since they had a shorter distance to travel.

In our personal journeys that we embark on to find a suitable spouse, each person spends different amounts of time in the turbulent "dating" sea.

Some spend a relatively short time before they find "The One." Others need to be on the singles scene for longer before they meet their life partner. The comforting message implied by the Red Sea miracle is that ultimately, all of us get to dry land and find our intended.

In truth, not only does this inspirational message apply to singles looking for a match, it applies to all of us who have faced life's inevitable challenges.

Some of us are blessed to overcome our travails relatively quickly. Others may need to face the tumultuous waters for a longer period of time. Regardless of how difficult our challenges seem, we always need to trust in God and believe that He will ultimately bring each and every one of us to the dry, sure shore.

This Shabbat is called Shabbat Shirah – the Sabbath of Song. May we all merit to sing songs of joy when we reach our personal shores of happiness. May we collectively merit to sing the ultimate song of joy when all mankind leaves behind the turbulent waters and reaches the era of peace, prosperity and spiritual growth for all.

Rabbi Avrohom Jacks is spiritual leader of Congregation Zichron Kedoshim in Montreal.

Turning toward God

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

JEWISH EDUCATION
The Next Generation

In an article titled "Teaching Spirituality in Day Schools and Yeshiva High Schools," Prof. Moshe Sokolow, who teaches Bible and Jewish education at Yeshiva University, reviewed the mission statements of a sample of New York schools and even one in Toronto. Many of the statements skirted around the word spirituality but did include numerous mentions of Halachah, learning Torah, developing the whole child and so on. The curricula weren't organized around *dvekut* – clinging or connection to God – in almost any way. The conclusion is that we are creating an informed generation of Jews, but not necessarily ones that recognize the God-quest at the centre of a Jew's mission.

Finding God doesn't occur *ex nihilo*. It's an art we need to cultivate in our children when they're young, as synagogue congregants, on a consistent basis. We have actual letters from the Second Temple period that convey what kind of feeling the Temple evoked. One such letter remarks that one who sees the Temple and its priests "will come to astonishment and indescribable wonder, and will be stirred by the holy quality which pertains to every detail." Synagogues are called *mikdash me'at* (a miniature Temple), but do they create a microcosmic version of this experience?

Is finding God a priority in our educational system? Does the value of feeling *dvekut* influence the curricula of our schools? Do our teachers communicate that this is an important notion? Does the tfillah that takes place in our schools teach our children the essence of connecting to Hashem?

Each person can answer these questions in their own way, and each individual Jew can continue that quest privately as well. It's remarkable to consider how small things can be helpful in this area.

The following was written by Rabbi Ed Feinstein, who has a large Conservative congregation out in California. "We North Americans are insane. Eleven p.m. every night, we snuggle up, ready for bed, and what's the last thing we do? We switch on the evening news. Thirty minutes of murder, brutality, corruption, catastrophe, moral lunacy, sports and weather. Good night. And then in the morning we are awakened by the clock radio set to some news station. And we begin the day with… murder, brutality, corruption, catastrophe, moral lunacy, sports and weather. And you want to know why you're depressed?"

Mitzvah, at least in theory, is not about habit, nor is it about drudgery. Mitzvah is a reminder that we are alive for a short time and we have an opportunity to seek out the highest of heights.

For two minutes at the end of each day, we can firmly click off the television, Internet, telephone, rush of appointments and loud noises of the world and turn toward God.

We can say Shema slowly and luxuriously. Every night. We can rise and do the same thing. We can be mindful of who we love and how we are going to talk today. We actually have the time. We just need the will.

Jewish Life

A many-sided novel

The World to Come, by Dara Horn. W.W. Norton & Company.

Books
Bernard Baskin

This unusual, many-sided novel was inspired by a real-life art theft from a Jewish museum in Manhattan some years ago. The painting by Chagall, Over Vitebsk, depicted a bearded Jew floating over the skyline, over the housetops of a rural village. The figure seems to be walking, unaware that he is actually in flight.

When Ben Ziskind visits the museum one day to participate in a social singles mixer, he is astonished to see the familiar Chagall, which he is certain used to hang on the living room wall of his parent's home in New Jersey.

In the wake of his mother's recent death and the collapse of his marriage, Ben is angry and disturbed. In a moment of irrational rage and convinced of the provenance of the painting, he wrenches it from the wall and runs.

Where did the painting come from? The author goes back in time to a Jewish boy's school in Malakhovka, set up by the Soviet authorities for orphaned children. In an impetuous moment, Chagall, who was a teacher at the school, gave the painting to a promising student, who in time turns out to be Ben's grandfather. We follow the boy and the painting through several traumatic generations of change and suffering.

Another teacher at the school was the Yiddish writer who went by the one name Der Nister (the hidden one). Chagall manages to leave the Soviet Union, to enjoy both fame and fortune. Der Nister unhappily remains relatively unknown, a figure of deprivation, poverty and abuse.

Mixed into the complex plot are Yiddish short stories, homilies and parables, including some by I.L. Peretz, Shalom Alecheim and Der Nister.

The author, who received her PhD degree from Harvard in the field of Yiddish and Hebrew literature, makes creative use of Jewish folklore and mysticism, most notably the tradition that before we are born we know all the secrets of the world, but at the moment of birth an angel presses a finger to our lips and we forget everything we knew. This angelic action explains the dent beneath our noses.

Ben eventually falls in love with Erica, a member of the museum's staff who has discovered the secret of the painting and knows that Ben is its thief.

A terrorist act, a truck loaded with explosives, turns the Jewish museum into an inferno. Ben enters the tottering building in search of Erica. His fruitless attempt ends in semi-consciousness. "He slipped in the mud again, pawed at the walls, pulled himself up to stand, and reached for the doorknob. 'Erica?' he called, and listened for her answer. And then he opened the door and entered the world to come."

Babies figure prominently in much of the book's folklore. At one point the author strives to imagine a state of existence where the unborn undergo a series of immersions in pools of water: the pool of ice-filled hate, the cold still pool of grief, the pool of warm friendship and finally, the pool of love.

The bathhouse attendant explains, "Once you are born you might feel all the things into the world to come… I hope it never will. But if it does, I want you to be prepared."

Beautifully written, symphonic in its layers of the real and the imaginary, combining elements of mystery, romance, theology and folklore, The World to Come is an engrossing literary adventure.

The Tu b'Shvat seder, Part 2

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Are you ready for the seder?

No, not *that* seder. Although it is far less famous than the one in the spring, Tu b'Shvat does have its own traditional seder. And like the one on Passover, the Tu b'Shvat seder is centred around food and is rich in symbolism both mystical and environmental. Today, a look at the Tu b' Shvat seder.

In the 16th century, the Kabbalists of Tzfat compiled a Tu b'Shvat seder that involves enjoying the fruits of the tree, particularly those native to the Land of Israel, and discusses philosophical and kabbalistic concepts associated with the day. According to the Aish HaTorah educational site, the seder is a great way to appreciate the bounty that we so often take for granted. **[tinyurl.com/seder03]**

Yitzhak Buxbaum's kabbalistic Tu b'Shvat Seder draws upon the teachings of the Talmud, the Baal Shem Tov, the Arizal and other Jewish mystics. For example, we learn that we are actually held accountable for *not* eating a new fruit when presented with the opportunity. Why? "Because each life form, even fruit, is entrusted to a specific angel. By saying a blessing over a fruit, we empower that angel to reproduce more of that fruit. One who refrains from partaking of a fruit deprives the world of the spiritual influence that the blessing would have provided." **[tinyurl.com/seder08]**

As well, there's Rabbi Yonah Bookstein's A Kabbalist's Feast. **[tinyurl.com/seder07]** Jerusalem's Diaspora Yeshiva's Mystical Seder for the New Year of Trees calls for 22 foods, including red and white wine, olives, dates, walnuts, carobs, pistachios, azaroles, quinces and hackberries. (You can substitute similar fruits.) **[tinyurl.com/seder11]**

Tu b'Shvat is also the perfect time to assess how Judaism treats the environment. In Deuteronomy 20:19, we are told that when an army lays siege to a city, it must not destroy its fruit-bearing trees. **[tinyurl.com/seder01]** Eilon Schwartz of Jerusalem's Heschel Center for Environmental Learning and Leadership analyzes this commandment against wanton destruction of trees and explains how humans are both responsible for – and dependent on – trees. **[tinyurl.com/seder04]**

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) continues that theme. "This Tu b'Shvat, as we eat of the fruit of the earth and celebrate with friends and family, let us consider how we each can tread more lightly on Earth, how we can help our Jewish institutions to practice more fully Judaism's environmental traditions, and how we all together can motivate our government to tend the public lands we all share." **[tinyurl.com/seder05]** The COEJL seder is titled The Trees Are Davening. **[tinyurl.com/seder10]** Elizabeth Schaumberg adapted another environmental seder for the Pritzker Center for Jewish Education in Chicago. **[tinyurl.com/seder02]**

For yet more variations, there is Rabbi Yossi Michalowicz's Tu b'Shvat Seder **[tinyurl.com/seder09]** and Ari Davidow's Tu b'Shvat Seder Toolkit. **[tinyurl.com/seder12]**

For the past few years, the Global Tu b'Shvat has held a high-tech variation by joining Jewish schools around the world via videoconference, including Toronto's Bialik Hebrew Day School. **[tinyurl.com/seder06]** Two years ago, they were joined by Leon Blum at the NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston. He explains research being conducted to grow produce in space. **[tinyurl.com/seder13]**

If you are hosting a seder, then you'll need to know what to put on the table. Some people may prefer to go minimalist and focus on almonds, dates, figs, raisins and (what always seems rock-hard) carob. If you want to put a bit more work into celebrating the holiday, here are some recipes to try out – Sephardi "Prehito" Bulgur Pudding followed by Dates Stuffed with Lamb and Compote with Spiced Wine. Top it all off with Walnut Carob Halvah. **[tinyurl.com/seder15]**

The Tu b'Shvat Recipe Index recommends Seven Species Salad (Salat Shivat HaMinim), Persian Date Halvah, Uchpolo (Bucharan Rice) and, if you have room, 180 others. **[tinyurl.com/seder16]** I like Roberta Kalechofsky's trendy-sounding Eco Compote, which is composed of dried fruits boiled with sugar and honey and topped with Tofutti "ice cream." **[tinyurl.com/seder19]**

And to top it all off, there's even a Tu b'Shvat Fruitcake, which thankfully "is lighter than the classic version."

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

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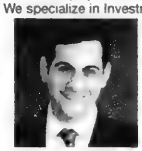
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Campuses hostile to Jewish students, panel says

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The Jewish community needs to take universities back from anti-Israel student groups who have created an atmosphere on campus that is hostile to Jewish students and supporters of Israel, says Sean Egan, a University of Toronto medical professor.

Egan, along with Lawrence Hart, a McMaster University medical professor, and Orna Hollander, executive director of the Canadian Israel Advocacy Centre, led a Jan. 21 discussion at the law offices of Cassels Brock & Blackwell titled Defending Freedom on Campus.

It was sponsored by the Canadian Jewish Civil Rights Association and the Speakers Action Group to address concerns about anti-Israel groups that have been organizing "Israeli Apartheid Week" (IAW) events every year since 2004.

Egan, who is Catholic, said it's unfair to characterize Israel as an apartheid state, because Israeli Arabs are allowed to vote, they have seats in the Knesset, their own newspapers, sit on the Supreme Court, teach in Israeli universities, and practise medicine in Israeli hospitals.

He said that when Israel declared its independence in 1948, more than one million Jews from surrounding Arab countries were expelled from their countries and had their property confiscated, and Jewish communities, which had been in existence for more than 1,000 years before the Arab conquest of the lands, were cleansed of Jews.

"It is particularly ironic that [U of T's] Arab Student Collective libels Israel as an apartheid state when Arab countries are effectively Judenrein," Egan said.

"This is more that an issue of unpleasantness on campus. The IAW comes at a time when Israel is being threatened with nuclear annihilation by Iran and Israel is under constant attack from terrorists targeting civilians."

Hart spoke about an incident last year when the Jewish Student Association (JSA) complained to McMaster's administration about a banner that was put up by IAW organizers. It depicted a Palestinian youth who was standing next to an Israeli soldier holding a blood-drenched Israeli flag.

Public forum, rally turned into a 'hate-fest against Israel'

The decision by the McMaster administration to have the banner removed prompted the organization of a public forum and rally "in the defence of free speech," which turned into a "hate-fest against Israel," Hart said.

"After the forum, out came the banners that read, 'Viva Intifadah, Death to Israel, Death to Jews.'"

He said that while the JSA did file an official complaint against the university for allowing the incident to take place on campus, a hate crimes police officer in Hamilton, who was not Jewish, asked, "'Where is the Jewish community? Why are they not doing anything?' And he took it under his own volition to put in a complaint to the Attorney General of Ontario, pulling together all the aspects of what happened at McMaster," Hart said.

He said that the complaints, both to the university and the attorney general have yet to be settled.

Hart criticized some Jewish community groups that practise "soft activism."

"There needs to be a much stronger emphasis on action rather than this passive approach."

Hollander said that the hostility and intimidation that pro-Israel students feel has reached classrooms as well. Regardless of whether students are enrolled in sociology, biology or history courses, professors and students use class time to condemn Israel.

In addition to the numerous rallies and demonstrations that take place on campuses throughout the year, many anti-Israel activists are on student councils, she said.

"Many past presidents and VPs are actually leaders of the anti-Israel movement, and as we speak, there is a York University student council meeting, and on the agenda today is the situation in Gaza and what resolution they are going to be passing as a result of that."

On Jan. 21, the York Federation of Students passed a motion condemning Israel for its war against Hamas, calling it "the single largest massacre in Gaza."

University administrations are choosing to stay out of the on-campus conflict "because they are intimidated as well," Hollander said.

"Sometimes the administration's decision not to be involved really puts our students in a bad place. They are told by the administration that they can't be helped, and many times our community is at a loss as to how to be a resource for the students."

Hollander suggested that those who make large donations to universities, do so on a condition that the schools work to better protect Jewish students from intimidation and anti-Semitism.

"We have many people that donate to universities without strings attached… I don't know why people agree to give millions of dollars to a campus that doesn't do its part in ensuring the safety of our students."

Egan agreed with Hollander, saying that "publicly funded institutions are being taken over and used to destroy our freedoms, and I think that the university system and the media are places where we all spend a huge amount of money and those are at the forefront of anti-Semitism in Canada and the western world. I think we need to take them back, and the only way to take them back is to put some strings on the public money that universities are going to depend upon."

Egan added that in no other subject area would a university justify the dissemination of falsehoods on the basis of free speech.

"I don't think there would be support for free speech if these people were promoting… misinformation about various principles of physics, so why is it acceptable to teach misinformation [about Israel] on the taxpayer's dollar?" he asked.

Hart suggested that legal avenues be explored.

"Putting the administration into the fire with the threat or the prospect of a possible lawsuit against them for not protecting their students… I think that is something to think about."

Max Eisen, a prominent Holocaust survivor who was in the audience, commented that the Jewish community needs to be more proactive.

"Where are the Jewish brains who can think about how to go about these things? Why are we fighting our battles in pieces, different groups at a time? Why don't we come together?" Eisen asked.

"All these things start with words, and believe me, it is not going to get better. This is not only about Israel, it is about all of us here in North America. They are going to come after us," he said.

"It is not just about Israel, but if something happens to Israel, we are all done for."

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Winnipeg seniors centre restricts public forums

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — In a move to keep out a Jewish group that's critical of Israel, a Jewish seniors centre here has barred any public forums except those sponsored by the centre itself or its owner, the National Council of Jewish Women.

The Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre, a north Winnipeg seniors centre that celebrated its 25th anniversary last spring, instituted the new policy Dec. 18.

The United Jewish People's Order (UJPO) – a left-wing secular humanist organization founded in 1926 that's highly critical of Israel and had been holding programs at the centre since 2005 – claims the new policy is intended primarily to keep out its political programs.

UJPO's dispute with Gwen Secter began in late May 2007 and relate to a forum on Israel planned for early June, UJPO's president, Roz Usiskin, said in a letter to the Jewish Post and News in Winnipeg. The subject was to be Israel's war with Hezbollah in 2006.

"On May 26 [2007]," she wrote, "after publicity was underway, we received a phone call from Gwen Secter staff that the UJPO forum on Israel could not be held on their premises. In a subsequent letter dated June 7, '08, [Gwen Secter] stated that their decision was made 'after it was brought to our attention about the controversial nature of the discussion and the potential for criticism of the State of Israel.'"

In a letter of response on June 28, UJPO suggested that in future, in order to avoid difficulties, the Gwen Secter Centre might consider a disclaimer policy for renters, stating that the centre isn't responsible for the views expressed by the renters or their speakers.

"This policy is common practice in the media and in public buildings," Usiskin said. "This proposal appeared to resolve the issue."

However, in a letter on Aug. 28, 2008, the Gwen Secter board wrote that UJPO public forums can no longer be held in the Gwen Secter Centre building.

When UJPO members asked for an explanation, they received a second letter from the Gwen Secter board, on Sept. 18, stating that there had been phone calls from prominent members of the Jewish community in Winnipeg strongly objecting to UJPO being permitted to hold public discussion forums in the building owned by the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW).

As well, the community members suggested that the nature of UJPO's discussions casts aspersions on Israel and, therefore, may be contrary to NCJW's goals and ideals.

The community members also said the disclaimer about the opinions of groups that meet in the facility wasn't satisfactory.

"Opinions about the actions of the Israeli government are not monolithic within this community," Usiskin wrote in her letter to the Post.

"We feel that this decision by the Gwen Secter is part of an effort to prevent alternative viewpoints, to stifle debate and control discussion on important issues that matter to Jews here and in Israel. We believe that the exchange of views strengthens a community… This decision casts a negative light on the Gwen Secter board and the 'prominent' people who pressured the board. It harms our institutions and community and stifles intelligent dialogue."

The leftist group is now seeking another venue for its activities and hopes to continue its work in the city's north end, Usiskin wrote.

UJPO springs from Winnipeg's Jewish socialist/Communist tradition. For many years, the leftist organization held all its public forums and other activities at the Na'amat Hall on north Main Street, several blocks north of the Gwen Secter Centre.

In the fall of 2005, after Na'amat's decision to leave its rented premises and move to a smaller office, UJPO approached the centre about holding its programs there.

"Our membership was growing," Usiskin said in her letter. "We decided to move our activities to the Gwen Secter Centre to benefit from their larger and better facilities.

"When we applied to Gwen Secter, we informed them of our various activities, explaining that our main programs over the years were a series of monthly public forums on a variety of subjects, including Jewish cultural topics, health issues, aboriginal affairs, Canadian politics – federal, provincial and city – as well as forums on Israel."

Usiskin said UJPO's forums are educational. "Information and ideas are exchanged," she wrote. "No one is prevented from giving his or her views and discussion is encouraged. The tradition of the Jewish people is to engage in scholarly debate and critical inquiry. Our history and traditions have taught us to pursue the cause of social justice and human rights, excluding no one. That is the history of the Jews in Winnipeg whose participation in the struggle for what is right for all is legendary."

She said that UJPO brought a new North End Jewish Folk Choir to the centre, as well as an annual Warsaw Ghetto memorial program, both of which Gwen Secter agreed to co-sponsor. UJPO members also joined the centre and participated in its programs.

Usiskin was on vacation and not available to comment directly for this article.

Rose Aziman, president of National Council of Jewish Women in Winnipeg, and representatives from the centre declined to comment on the situation.

But Gwen Secter co-president Menorah Waldman has resigned from her position to protest the new policy.

"I believe that all facets of the Jewish community should be welcomed at the centre," Waldman said.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Personal finance guide born from a once-lavish lifestyle

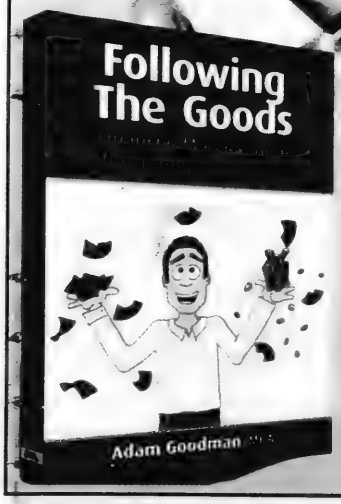
By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

"It has taken me 28 years to learn the value of a dollar," wrote Adam Goodman in his personal finance guide. Following the Goods: Financial Management for the Young and Ambitious, which he hopes will help students and young professionals learn from his money-managing mistakes.

"When I think of all the money I've wasted, I finally realize that if I had done things differently, I probably wouldn't be living in my mom's basement right now, asking my parents to help me lease a car."

The 29-year-old Schulich School of Business graduate, who grew up in the affluent suburb of Thornhill and currently works in the telecommunications industry, said he got the idea for the book, which is self-published, when he realized that although he had been working since he was 15, he never saved a penny.

Adam Goodman



"I met a friend at school who had managed to save more than $50,000, and at the same time, I had managed to save nothing," Goodman recalled.

He said learning about financial management wasn't part of the curriculum when he was growing up, and he didn't have regular conversations about money with his parents.

"It is kind of ironic that both my parents are involved in the financial services in one way or another, but they never actually sat me down and had an in-depth conversation with me. Everyone just thought I would pick it up."

He said that since he started working as a teen, his cash flow was never an issue.

"I was always making good money doing whatever I was doing, whether it was in the dot-com boom days or before that in high school working part time."

He said when he was 19, working at the tail end of the dot-com boom, he was making more than $100,000 a year.

"But I didn't have a concept of saving because my parents weren't looking into my bank account and they never saw whether I had money or not."

Goodman said he would blow his money on clothes, expensive dinners and electronics.

"I made a lot of silly decisions. Probably one of the worst is that I owned a car for only three months."

He said he bought a sports car, a Honda Prelude, and within three months, he traded it in for a Ford Explorer.

"I rolled the loss I took on [the Prelude] into another car loan."

He said that although he was able to complete an undergraduate program debt free, he didn't manage to save any money, and he was forced to rack up a $60,000 debt taking loans for graduate school.

A meeting with a fellow grad student, one who was two years younger than he was and yet still managed to save $50,000, inspired him to educate himself about financial management by reading books and speaking to professionals.

"I'd say the most valuable lesson I've learned is that there is no such thing as a silly question... Some of the reasons why I didn't start making proper financial decisions and start thinking about it was because I was scared of asking why. I was scared of finding out the answer," Goodman said.

He decided to share his newfound wisdom with other young adults through his book, which offers advice about personal financial management through his life experiences.

Although Canadians are suffering through a recession right now for the unforeseeable future, the advice he would give today is that exact same advice he would give two years ago.

"Create a budget and stick with it. No matter what you do, you have to have a budget because... it will help you allocate your money to help you save, so that you're not spending 100 per cent or 150 per cent of what you make," Goodman said.

"Even if you're buying a Starbuck's [coffee] a day for example, it is important to include that in your budget, because it could add up to more than $500 for the year."

He said it is important to start saving early and as soon as possible.

"Regardless of whether you are eight years old, 20 years old or 45 years old, if you haven't started saving, start now because the sooner you start saving, the more it will grow."

Another important tip, Goodman said, is to pay yourself first before you pay your creditors.

"Just make sure that you pay yourself 10 per cent of what you make and put that into savings," he said, adding that it doesn't matter whether the 10 per cent goes into a savings account or an RRSP.

"If you don't pay yourself now, you never will."

An excerpt from Goodman's book reveals that as of this year, the Canadian government implemented the Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA).

"This is a new type of savings vehicle which will help individuals who contribute to the TFSA grow their savings tax-free throughout the lifetime of the account. The TFSA is not meant to replace the RRSP, but rather to compliment it. The RRSP is meant to help you plan for retirement, while the TFSA is designed to help you plan for life's big purchases."

It is also important for people to set financial goals for themselves, Goodman said.

"Let's say you're 19 years old and you're graduating from school in one or two years, and you think, 'I want to buy a house one day.' You have to start planning for it. You need a down payment."

Regardless of whether you put five per cent or 25 per cent down on a house, it'll still be in the tens of thousands of dollars, he added.

Parents can also help their children start on a road to a healthy financial future by starting a conversation with their kids at an early age.

"Even if it's setting up a bank account and putting in $5 a month, which my parents did do when I was younger, make sure that you continue that conversation into their teens."

Goodman said that while saving money is important, people also need to find a balance between saving and spending.

"There is a balance there. It is not about saving all your money, and it's not about spending all your money. It's finding an equal balance and enjoying life and managing finances."

For more information about Goodman's book, visit www.followingthegoods.com.

One per cent of inspiration goes a long way

Life Coach Corner
Judy Siblin-Librach

You know the expression, "It's one per cent inspiration and 99 per cent perspiration"?

Well, normally I would focus on the 99 per cent perspiration and how it takes a lot of hard work, commitment, focus and energy to make things happen. And there is no question that it all begins with hard work and, for lack of a better word, "perspiration." But for the purposes of this column, I want to focus on the word "inspiration," because that's where the most joy, happiness and meaningful living all begin.

Inspiration. What does it mean to be inspired and to live and an inspired life? Well, according to Dr. Wayne W. Dyer, in his book Inspiration: Your Ultimate Calling, "when you are inspired... dormant forces, faculties and talents become alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person than you ever dreamed yourself to be."

Also, when you are inspired, "your mind transcends limitations," an important concept that means you can achieve things you never thought possible.

Where a lot of people get stuck is they don't know where to begin. One of Dyer's theories is that "sharing is inspiration," meaning we have to become the kind of person who is more interested in sharing than in receiving, and by doing so, we move closer toward inspiration.

He writes: "I speak here of an inner transformation in which extending love outward is our predominant disposition. This can take the form of a silent blessing toward someone we may have previously judged, a loving greeting, a kind remark, or a thought wishing the highest good for all concerned. As simple as it sounds, this is the ultimate impetus for feeling inspired."

A great way to become inspired is to find a quiet corner, meditate, breathe and just be still. Also, it's very important to stay open to all the possibilities and begin with the end in mind, meaning as Dyer says, "the answer to 'how' is 'yes.' You may never know exactly how you are going to accomplish the feeling of inspiration, but by saying yes! to life and to all that calls you, the 'how' will take care of itself."

Dyer talks about the principles that will lead you to a more inspired life. They include Being Independent of the Good Opinion of Others and Staying Detached from the Outcome, which means, for example, to write the book not so it will be a bestseller, but just to be "in your bliss writing what you believe and trust that it will all unfold as it should." My personal favourite principle is Don't Die Wondering. It is one of my favourites because it suggests that if we stay in action, we will never be full of regrets that we didn't follow our ultimate calling.

Leading a life of simplicity is another one of the principles in Dyer's book. His theory is that by simplifying your life, you will make way for more peace, love and joy, and ultimately by using 12 tools, you will be able to hear the call of inspiration.

The 12 tools are:

- unclutter your life;
- clear your calendar of unwanted and unnecessary activities;
- be sure to keep some time free;
- make time for meditation and yoga;
- return to the simplicity of nature;
- learn to put distance between you and your critics;
- make time for play;
- look after your health;
- slow down;
- do everything you can to eliminate debt;
- don't make money your guiding principle;
- and always remember your spirit.

In another fabulous book called A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers will Rule the Future, the very popular Daniel H. Pink talks about creating an inspiration board. He says, "When you're working on a project, empty your bulletin board and turn it into an inspiration board. Each time you see something that you find compelling – a photo, a piece of fabric, the page of a magazine – tack it to the board. Before long, you'll start seeing connections between the images that will enliven and expand your work."

Find inspiring people to study and to be around and, also, you be an inspiration to others. But mostly, inspiration comes when you are not racing around and when you are quiet. In Eckhart Tolle's Stillness Speaks, he writes, "True intelligence operates silently. Stillness is where creativity and solutions are found."

What inspires you? Who are you inspired by? What do you do to become and stay inspired? I would love to hear your thoughts on inspiration, and I hope you stay in touch with the stillness within you, because that's the way you will ultimately reconnect with yourself.

Judy Siblin-Librach is an Adler-trained coach. Website: www.findingyourbliss.com; e-mail: judyelle@ican.net

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Congratulations to Albert & Gloria Barris on the occasion of their 65th wedding anniversary. Mazel tov from your loving and proud family.

Mazel tov to Lily Polon on the occasion of your 95th birthday. With love from your children, grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

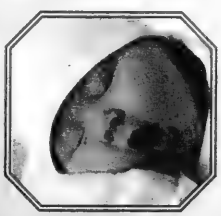
Happy birthday,
Mr. Avrom Gross, from all your friends.

Mazel tov to Mark & Marcie on the birth of their third child, Ari Noam Goldberg, baby brother to Mayan and Elan.

As featured on onlysimchas! Celebrating Jewish Life www.onlysimchas.com

Mazel tov on the first anniversary of Ephraim Hoffman & Lori Motola.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Meir Lipschitz & Jordy Bregman.



Mazel tov to Ruchi & Moishi Neumann on the birth of a baby boy.

Mazel tov on the marriage of Isaac Shaer & Cheryl Aziz.

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What's New

By REBECCA NADLER

Have you seen it lately?
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What's New deadlines: Monday, Feb. 5, is the deadline for the Feb. 19, issue and Monday, Feb. 16, is the deadline for the Feb. 26 issue. issue I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Thursday, Feb. 5

CHRISTIE BLATCHFORD

Beth Sholom Synagogue Book Club presents **Christie Blatchford** speaking about her book Fifteen Days. 7:30 p.m. $15, non-members $20. RSVP, 416-783-6103.

Saturday, Feb. 7

PARSHAH DISCUSSION

David Schaeffer speaks about the weekly portion, Beshallach, 9:30 a.m. at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. 416-221-3433

SHABBAT SHIRAH *KUMZITZ*

Join Shaarei Shomayim Congregation for a *kumzitz* in honour of Shabbat Shirah with **Cantor Avraham Sultan** and Shma Koleinu. 7:30 p.m. Free. 416-789-3213

Sunday, Feb. 8

MODERN ORTHODOXY

Torah in Motion presents a conference on "**Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch** and the Development of Modern Orthodoxy" with **Rabbi Adam Ferziger**, of Bar-Ilan University; **Rachel Heuberger**, of University Library Frankfurt am Main; **Marc Shapiro**, of University of Scranton; **Edward Breuer**, of Hebrew University. Sunday, 9:15 a.m.-3 p.m. at Congregation B'nai Torah. $25, students and TimPass holders free, www.torahinmotion.org or 416-633-5770

NEW YEARS OF THE TREES

The Jewish Russian Community Center hosts an exotic fruit tasting and lecture by **Rabbi Chaim Hildeshaim** on "Why Do We Celebrate the New Years of the Trees?" 8 p.m. 8808 Bathurst St. For men and women of all backgrounds. 416-222-7105, ext. 224

Monday, Feb. 9

TU B'SHVAT SEDER

Emunah Women of Toronto hold a Tu b'Shvat seder with **Rebbetzin Shulamis Witty** and **Leona Lakser**. A light lunch will be served. $10, non-members $15. 12:30 p.m. at 4300 Bathurst St. in the party room. Reserve, 416-636-0036.

INFORMATION SESSION

Participate in a session on mindfulness with Baycrest research fellow **Dr. Michael Marxen** on treatment of mood disorders, stress reduction and relaxation. 1:30-3 p.m. Register, 416-785-2500, ext. 3374, or lkamenitz@baycrest.org.

DAVENING SKILLS

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation skills series continues with **David Freudenstein** teaching "Weekday Shacharit." 7 p.m. 416-789-3213, ext. 202

OTTAWA ETHICS LECTURE

The Ottawa Torah Institute Yeshiva High School holds its annual Jewish ethics lecture with Rosh Yeshiva **Rabbi Eliezer Ben-Porat**; former government trade negotiator **Aaron J. Sarna**; and an Israeli Embassy representative speaking about "Redeeming Hostages: Is the Price Too High?" 7:15 p.m. Soloway Jewish Community Centre. Tickets, 613-244-3939 or secretary@ottawatorah.org.

Tuesday, Feb. 10

TUESDAYS FILM SERIES

Beth Tikvah Synagogue Tuesday afternoon movie series with **Larry Anklewicz** continues with the film Rape of Europa. 2 p.m. $5. 416-221-3433

JEWISH NATIONAL FUND

Beth David Sisterhood hosts **Frank Wilson**, vice-president of JNF Canada, on "Jewish National Fund: A Tradition of Supporting Israel." 8. p.m. Non-members $5.

Continued on page 27

Taglit-Birthright Israel : Canada Israel Experience
Summer is almost here. Register for your
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416-398-6931
is a gift from Taglit-Birthright Israel. CIE programs are supported by local UJA/CJA Campaigns. This trip is open to 18-26 year

Continued from page 26

Wednesday, Feb. 11

DREAM, VISION, FUTURE

Join D.A.N.I., which develops and nurtures independence for Jewish young adults with physical and/or cognitive challenges, for "Our Dream, Our Vision, Our Future," the kick-off of the annual gala and lottery. 8 p.m. D.A.N.I.'s Place, 12 McAllister Rd. Presentation by **Lea Ellenbogen**. All welcome. RSVP, 905-731-6606.

Other News

TODDLERS MUSIC CLUB

Shaar Shalom Synagogue's Toddlers Music Club, ages up to five, runs Thursdays, Feb. 12-March 12, 10-10:45 a.m. with snack and singing Jewish songs. $36. Registration, youth@shaarshalom.ca or 905-886-4975.

TAREK FATAH SPEAKS

The Speakers Action Group and the Canadian Jewish Civil Rights Association business lunch lecture "Accommodation or Intimidation?" with **Tarek Fatah**, journalist and founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress, and **Salim Mansur**, of University of Western Ontario. Thursday, Feb. 12 at the Ontario Bar Association, 20 Toronto St. $20. By reservation only. www.speakersaction.com or 416-966-0722

JOSEPH AND ESTHER

Rachel Adelman, of MaTaN, Jerusalem, speaks on "Scepters, Signet Rings and Masks: Joseph and Esther in the Imperial Court." She explores parallel stories and roles of Joseph and Esther in the courts of foreign palaces. Thursday, Feb. 12, 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. 416-789-3213

HEBREW COURSE

Beth Emeth Synagogue offers a free Hebrew course for those who can read Hebrew slowly and want practise reading and understanding every day and Shabbat prayers. Six sessions. Begins Thursday, Feb. 12, 8 p.m. Register, 416-633-3838.

LODZER DANCE

The Lodzer Centre Congregation hosts a dance with Go Freddy Go playing music of the 1950s and '60s. Saturday, Feb. 14, 8 p.m. $25. Tickets, 416-636-6665.

YU KOLLEL YOM RISHON

Yeshiva University Kollel Yom Rishon Sunday scholars series offers three mornings of study. Feb. 15, **Dr. David Pelcovitz** on "Children and Trauma: Talking to Children About Loss and Terrorism in Israel" at BAYT; Feb. 22, **Steven Fine** on "Is the Vatican Hiding the Temple Menorah?" at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation; and March 1, **Rabbi Benjamin Blech** on "War and Peace: A Jewish View of Militarism vs. Pacifism" at Clanton Park. Breakfast 9 a.m. Lecture 9:30 a.m. 416-783-6960

LIMMUD RETURNS FEB. 15

A festival of Jewish learning and culture at U of T. Explore Torah, liturgy, Jewish history, eco-Judaism, poetry and more. www.limmud.ca or 647-838-7004

ENTERTAINING SENIORS

The Entertainers of the Wagman Centre, senior men and women who voluntarily entertain at seniors residences, nursing homes and hospitals, are looking for new members who love to sing, can attend rehearsals every Tuesday afternoon and participate in performances throughout the summer. For an audition, call 416-785-2500, ext. 2267.

ONE FAMILY FUND MISSION

Join One Family Fund's Women's Solidarity Trip to Israel May 21-31. Meet with victims of terror and show support for Israel. sarah@onefamilyfund.ca; 416-644-4955

HU: CALL FOR PAPERS

Hebrew University will host an international conference for research on Hebrew language and methods of teaching Hebrew as a second language, July 27-28, in Jerusalem. Proposals for lectures, workshops or posters must be submitted by March 1. Website: overseas.huji.ac.il

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living needs male volunteers to visit isolated male seniors – takes one to two hours a week on the day that best suits you – and volunteers to assist in the computer lab 9 a.m.-4 p.m. General computer knowledge is required to assist the teacher with Windows, Excel and Internet applications. Info, **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext.127, or naomiz@betelcentre.org

Baycrest needs volunteers to friendly visit, assist with programs, help in offices and support our Baycrest community. Hours can be flexible. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572, to set up a volunteer orientation.

JIAS TORONTO

Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, 4600 Bathurst St. #325. www.jiastoronto.org. To register, volunteer, or for more information on these programs, call 416-630-6481.

Telephone Language Companions. Volunteers needed to practise English with newcomers-over the phone from home. Call **Lea**, ext. 31.

JUMPStart: If you have a volunteer, mentorship, or job opportunity in the skilled labour market for a newcomer, call **Simone** ext. 24.

Homework Club. Volunteer tutors needed for middle and high school immigrants. Wednesday nights in Thornhill. Russian or Hebrew helpful. Call ext. 30.

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child Service. 4600 Bathurst St. Information/registration 416-638-7800 or www.jfandcs.com. Call **Shawna** ext. 215 for info and registration.

Living With Teens: Six sessions on parenting adolescents without losing your cool. Begins Thursday, Feb. 12, 7 to 9 p.m. at Stephen Lewis Secondary School.

One Family, Two Homes: Three sessions for families experiencing separation and divorce. Children participate in separate age-appropriate groups. Thursdays, Feb. 12-26, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at Lipa Green Building.

FOR SENIORS

Beth Tikvah Friendship Group hosts **Diana Mingail** presenting her latest DVD, From Abraham to Sadam, the story of the Jews of Iraq. Thursday, Feb. 12, 2-4 p.m. $5, non-members. All welcome.

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC: Join an inter-generational program and lunch with students from a Jewish day school. 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or phyllisf@mnjcc.org

Earl Bales Seniors Club In The Park. Casino Rama, Wednesday, Feb. 11; Movie Day, Thursday, Feb. 19, 1 p.m. Call Tuesday-Thursday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

"Love Is in the Air" Lunch and Concert. Wednesday, Feb. 11, 12-2 p.m. $13, non-members $16.

Wellness Lecture: "Preparing for an Emergency." Thursday, Feb. 12, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

WAGMAN CENTRE

55 Ameer Ave. 416-785-2500.

Mardi Gras party, Thursday, Feb. 19, 3-4 p.m. Sing and dance with the George Grosman Band. Reserve by Feb. 13 at ext. 2267.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

"My Hebrew Picnic": Enjoy Hebrew with your child, newborn to 2 years old, with music, puppets and games. For beginners and native Hebrew speakers. Mondays, 10-10:45 a.m. Begins Jan. 19. "Shabbat Club": Children three to five years sing, tell stories, make challah, play games. Fridays, 9:45-11:15 a.m. Ext. 390.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

"New Jewish Feminism: Are We Done?" with **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein**. Thursday, Feb. 5, 8-9:30 p.m. Register, ext. 255 or kolel@bjcc.org.

"Current Israeli Geo-political Landscape" a lecture and discussion with **Amir Gissin**, consul general of Israel, Sunday, Feb. 8, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. $9, includes a light breakfast. Register, ext. 0 or jewishlife@mnjcc.org.

Cooking With **Itka**: Moroccan Cuisine, Sunday, Feb. 8, 7-9:30 p.m. $18. Info, **Ilana Hirt**, Jewishlife@mnjcc.org or ext. 154.

"Mystics, Medics and Merchants": Paintings by **Myriam Nafte** in the Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space through March 8.

KOSCHITZKYS TO RECEIVE CJC AWARD: Canadian Jewish Congress has announced that Julia and Henry Koschitzky are the recipients of this year's Samuel Bronfman Medal, to be awarded at CJC's 90th anniversary Plenary Assembly on May 31. The medal, named after its first recipient, is awarded to persons who have rendered distinguished service to the Canadian Jewish community.

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BRIDAL REGISTRY

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

The Hon. Sydney Harris,	Jan 17/09	3303 Don Mills Rd
Morton Stern	Jan 19/09	27 Glenayr Rd
Leonard Katz	Jan 17/09	642 Sheppard Ave E
Ethel Listgarten	Jan 18/09	57 Weeping Willow Ln
Abraham Kliger	Jan 18/09	10 Senlac Rd
Mary Wolfe	Jan 18/09	21 Shallmar Blvd
Mona Winberg	Jan 19/09	55 Ellerslie Ave
William Meider	Jan 18/09	3174 Bathurst St
Jack Rotberg	Jan 20/09	5 Breen Cres
Don Lyons	Jan 20/09	86 Hillmount Ave
Josef Ijaky	Jan 21/09	88 Erskine Ave
Victor Topper	Jan 21/09	5 Hearthstone Cres
Flora Litvak	Jan 21/09	66 Collier St
Molly Willer	Jan 21/09	3560 Bathurst St
Anita Lubetzki	Jan 22/09	784 Centre St
Michael Tsapovsky	Jan 22/09	651 Via Romano Blvd
Pauline Wolfman	Jan 23/09	40 Old English Ln
Joshua Segal	Jan 22/09	133 Torresdale Ave
Bessie Resnick	Jan 22/09	551 Conlins Rd
Wolf Justein	Jan 23/09	1 Clark Ave W
Ron Toufar	Jan 16/09	1260 Marlborough Crt
Josie Sidenberg	Jan 23/09	306 Finch Ave E
Sheldon Altman	Jan 23/09	65 Skymark Dr
Dorothy Arlove Schwartz	Jan 24/09	3560 Bathurst St
Arthur Gryfe	Jan 23/09	14 Cartwheel Millway
Nina Ayzenberg	Jan 24/09	262 Ridley Blvd.

HEBREW BASIC

Sarah Bihari	Jan 21/09	5935 Bathurst Street
Benny Giterman	Jan 24/09	7460 Bathurst St.

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Dime, Samuel Pearson	Jan. 15/09	95 Baycrest Ave
Sipper, Reta	Jan. 17/09	784 Centre St
Kaplan, Benjamin	Jan. 18/09	7601 Bathurst St
Moskose, Hanna	Jan. 19/09	11 McMorran Cres
Goldberg, William	Jan. 19/09	3276 St. Clair Ave. E
Cohen, Morton Mayer	Jan. 20/09	100 Canyon Ave
Bleet, Clara Rebecca	Jan. 21/09	Private
Klein, Viktor	Jan. 21/09	
Safran, Sheldon	Jan. 20/09	Las Vegas
Jacobs, Sally	Jan. 22/09	140 Charlton Blvd
Sigal-Kelman, Patricia	Jan. 23/09	34 Carscadden Dr
Alterman, Mikhail	Jan. 23/09	Private
Gliksman, Alicia	Jan. 23/09	Private
Dor, Alexander	Jan. 24/09	7420 Bathurst St
Goodman, Ruth R.	Jan. 23/09	6 Clareville Cres
Starr, Doris	Jan. 24/09	3560 Bathurst St
Friedman, Rosa	Jan. 21/09	26 Marathon Ave
Gordon, Riva	Jan. 25/09	Private
Feldman,De Jong, Elisabeth	Jan. 24/09	4001 Bayview Ave

The family of the late

Morton (Morty) Mayer Cohen ז"ל

would like to express our heartfelt and deepest appreciation to our family, friends and the entire community for all their expressions of kindness and support during our time of sorrow.

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Devora (Granek) Starr ז"ל

who passed away January 25, 2009.

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Lillian Granek *(sister)*

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Obituary

Advocate for disabled led way for others

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Mona Winberg, who was born with cerebral palsy, will be remembered as one of the first people with a disability to become a spokesperson for the disabled.

Winberg, 76, died late last month after a two-week battle with pneumonia.

In a eulogy, nephew Sidney Troister said that when Winberg was born, her mother, Sarah, was told that her daughter would never walk or talk, and that she should be institutionalized.

"Way ahead of her time, Mona's mother refused to [listen] to the doctor's opinion. [Mona] was loved and cared for at home by her parents, and treated as much as possible like any other kid."

Troister said that although she had severely limited speech, mobility and hearing, Winberg went to school, wrote in a newsletter for the Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy, and went on to become the first person with a disability to be elected president of the federation.

Although it was difficult for her to be understood, he said, Winberg lobbied for Wheel Trans and accessibility, and she spoke to architects about accommodating people with disabilities.

In 1986, Winberg approached the Toronto Sun about writing a column that addressed the needs of disabled people, and for 10 years, wrote Disabled Today for the Sunday Sun.

"With her lack of control over her hands, it took Mona two full days just to type one of the columns," Troister said.

In her first column, he said, Mona wrote that "disabled people are neither larger-than-life heroes, nor pathetic objects of pity. We possess strengths and weaknesses, hopes and fears, capabilities and limitations, just like everyone else."

Troister said that in recognition of her work, Winberg received the King Clancy Award and the Fred Gardiner Award, and was inducted into the Terry Fox Hall of Fame. In 2002, she was awarded the Order of Canada by then-governor general Adrienne Clarkson in Ottawa.

"Throughout her adult life, Mona was a inspiration to her family and to the disabled throughout the country. With strong opinions, a sharp wit, courage, strength of character and an uncanny ability to charm decision-makers of all political stripes, she became a leader and a role model for people with disabilities," Troister said.

"She made a vital contribution to this country and to the place of disabled people in it. Her contribution is even more significant because she accomplished tasks that would have discouraged even a non-disabled person."

She also impressed others, including Patrick Boyer, who met Winberg when he was a member of Parliament in the 1980s and was crusading for equality rights for people with disabilities.

"Mona was simultaneously giving voice to the voiceless through her column. I think we inspired one another about what was possible," he said in an interview.

"When I met Mona, it was love at first sight. Here was a woman of solitary courage, of intelligence and humour, and of unrelenting advocacy. She sought a better deal for the more than one million Canadians who live with varying degrees of mental and physical disability," Boyer said.

After Winberg stopped writing her column, he said, he collaborated with her on a book due out in June, published by Blue Butterfly Books, called Solitary Courage: Mona Winberg and the Triumph over Disability.

"Mona's time on earth made a real difference in the lives of countless thousands, and Solitary Courage will help keep alive the example of her stellar leadership for others to now follow."

Winberg is survived by her sister-in-law Norma, her nieces and nephews, great-nieces and nephews, and a great-great-niece.

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Venezuelan synagogue attack cause of concern

By MARCY OSTER
JTA

CARACAS — International Jewish groups expressed concern after an attack on a Caracas synagogue and blamed Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez for creating an atmosphere of hate in his country.

Up to 15 people attacked the Tiferet Israel Sephardi synagogue late last Friday night, throwing Torah scrolls on the floor and damaging some, according to reports. They also painted epithets such as "death to the Jews" on the synagogue's walls.

The synagogue's guard was held at gunpoint and was found on the floor of the building by members on Saturday morning, the Jerusalem Post reported.

It's not the first such attack on Jewish institutions in the country, which broke off diplomatic relations with Israel over the Gaza military operation, the New York Times reported. In response, Israel expelled the Venezuelan envoy and his embassy staff last week.

"The response of the State of Israel is weak, late and in any case for us it's an honor," Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro told the Al-Jazeera news network about the expulsion. "We're proud that the State of Israel that exists today, led by these criminals, made this decision."

Hugo Chavez

The same shul was vandalized early last month. The Israeli embassy was also vandalized. A Jewish community centre was raided in 2007 in a search for illegal weapons. None were found.

Chavez's government decried the attack, the Times reported.

Chavez and local media had been increasingly critical of Israel during the previous week.

"The total disrespect of a Jewish house of worship reflects the escalating climate of hostility towards Jews in Venezuela," said David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee.

Harris added: "There are strong indications that what we are witnessing is a state-sponsored campaign of anti-Semitic persecution, spurred by both Venezuela's alliance with the Iranian regime and the surge of anti-Israel rhetoric during the recent conflict between Israel and Hamas."

Harris called on the international community to declare its solidarity with Venezuela's Jewish community.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center also blamed Chavez's demonization of Israel and the Jewish community as the catalyst for the shul attack and called on world leaders to denounce it.

"This was no mere hate crime from the margins of society, but a reflection of President Chavez's campaign to demonize Israel and her supporters," said rabbis Marvin Hier, the centre's founder and dean, and Abraham Cooper, its associate dean, in a statement. "It is frightening to watch the inevitable consequences of Iran's chief ally in the Americas promotion of hatred of the Jewish people escalate into an attack, more reminiscent of Nazi Germany in 1938, than a democracy in 2009. The fact that the members of this synagogue stayed away from services this Friday night out of fear that the anti-Israel campaign had generated says it all."

B'nai Brith International has asked the U.S. State Department to investigate the attack.

"This has got to stop," said B'nai Brith executive vice-president Daniel Mariaschin. "It is unacceptable for a government to incite hatred. Chavez has cultivated an environment where his followers feel comfortable threatening Jews."

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, urged Chavez to protect his country's Jewish community. "Sadly, this is not a random event in Venezuela. It is directly related to the atmosphere of anti-Jewish intimidation promoted by President Chavez and his government apparatus," Foxman said.

Chavez, Foxman said, "must ensure that his government quickly brings the perpetrators to justice."

Turkey shul set ablaze

By YOAV STERN
Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.

Vandals set a synagogue in northwest Turkey ablaze on Sunday, sources within the Turkish Jewish community have reported.

No one was apparently wounded in the attack, which took place in the city of Bursa. The extent of property damage has yet to be fully assessed.

The incident came amid a rift between Israel and Turkey that was sparked by fierce Turkish censure of Israel's offensive against Hamas in Gaza.

The synagogue is not currently in use for daily prayer, since it was shut after the city's Jewish community shrank over the past few decades.

Sunday's attack was the first such incident to take place in Turkey following Israel's campaign in Gaza, which ended about three weeks ago.

The operation triggered a spate of anti-Semitic attacks across the world, most recently the vandalizing of a synagogue in Venezuela's capital, Caracas, late on Friday night.

Outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, meanwhile, on Sunday warned the cabinet against deepening the schism with Turkey, a key ally of Israel.

"[I'm] very concerned by the behaviour in public on the subject of Turkey," Olmert said. "Our relations with Turkey are important, and I recommend that we don't intensify our statements on the subject."

But Olmert added, despite his warning, that Turkey was "not exempt from domestic considerations… being a Muslim state on the eve of elections."

RABBI POSITION AVAILABLE

Congregation Agudath Achim, founded in 1904, an unaffiliated, traditional congregation in Little Rock, Arkansas, seeks a dynamic Rabbi. We are a congregation of 80 families, with mixed seating in our sanctuary. The Rabbi we seek must be able to attract members based on teaching quality, spiritual leadership and community interaction. We need a Rabbi who can invigorate and lead the congregation in its second century. Our Rabbi must be able and willing to conduct all Shabbat and holiday services, including the reading of the Torah, and have demonstrated ritual skills in all life-cycle events. A smicha from a recognized rabbinic institution is required. A combined salary and benefit package between $80,000 and $100,000 (USD) is available, based on experience.

Please send résumé to
Rabbinic Search Committee
Congregation Agudath Achim
7901 West 5th St.
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CJN Purim Art Contest

It's time again for our annual **Purim Art Contest.**

Who can enter: Children in grades 1 to 6 inclusive are eligible. The children of *CJN* employees are not eligible.

Prizes: The judges will choose one drawing from two different students in each grade. These "winning" drawings will be published in *The CJN*'s 2009 Purim Poster. In addition, each of the 12 children whose drawings have been selected will receive a cheque for $25.

How to enter: You may submit as many drawings as you want. However, they should not be too small nor too large. Please paint or draw bright, bold, colourful pictures. You may use markers, crayons, paint or pencils. Please send us your name, address, phone number, age and grade along with your drawings.

You may mail or deliver your drawings to: CJN Community Contests, The Canadian Jewish News, 1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4. If you want us to return the pictures to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, we will be unable to do so.

The contest closes at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2009. We will undoubtedly receive many wonderful submissions from children all across the country. But only 12 of the drawings will be chosen as the "winners." The judges will base their decisions on a number of factors such as: the use of colour, the imaginative quality of the drawing and the way it tells an aspect of the story of Purim. The judges' decisions will be final. The chances of winning depend upon the number and quality of submissions received.

How the winner will be announced: The children whose pictures are chosen will be notified by telephone before the start of Shabbat on Friday, February 20, 2009.

When the prizes will be awarded: The "winning" pictures will be published in *The CJN* of March 5, 2009. Have fun and good luck.

Any litigation respecting the conduct and awarding of a prize in this contest may be submitted to the Régie des Loteries et courses du Québec.

Canadians play key roles at WJC plenary

By RON CSILLAG
Special to The CJN

JERUSALEM — Delegates to the 13th plenary of the World Jewish Congress held here last week left with a renewed solidarity with Israel in the wake of the country's military operation in Gaza.

More than 400 delegates from 90 countries, including 20 from Canada, came together for the two-day gathering to hear Israeli politicians reaffirm their nation's commitment to destroying terrorist infrastructure in Gaza, but also to listen to some delegates' heart-rending tales of anti-Semitism that the Gaza fighting triggered in their countries.

Iran was also front and centre, as experts issued dire warnings about the country's imminent nuclear capabilities.

U.S. cosmetics heir Ronald Lauder was reinstated as the New York-based WJC's president, while Moshe Ronen of Canada was reacclaimed as a vice-president.

Canadians played prominent roles at the meeting. In one instance, as a resolution proclaiming the Diaspora's solidarity with Israel was about to be passed, with a section singling out the United States and Australia for their special support during the Gaza incursion, Canadian Jewish Congress co-president Rabbi Reuven Bulka quickly rose to note Canada's "steadfast" support, too, adding that Canada's was the lone voice opposing a recent one-sided United Nations resolution on the fighting. Canada was added to the WJC resolution without debate.

In his remarks, Israeli President Shimon Peres said he sought to correct "misunderstandings and misrepresentations" about the Gaza conflict.

Since 2000, there have been 5,792 Qassam rockets and 4,411 mortars fired from Gaza into Israel, most of those since Israel quit the territory two years ago. The 20,000 or so overall terrorist attacks coming from Gaza resulted in 842 civilians and 325 Israeli troops killed in recent years.

"I don't know any country that went through such an experience," Peres said.

"So where is the disproportion?"

Contrary to charges that Israel laid siege to Gaza, Peres said that from June 2007 onward, Israel allowed 42,327 trucks carrying 1.8 million tonnes of fuel and supplies into Gaza. "The whole story of a siege is totally unfounded. There was never a shortage of fuel… [or] food."

Peres referred to a stockpile, found in 2005, of weapons smuggled into Gaza: 300,000 kilos of dynamite, 20,000 rockets, rifles, machine guns and pistols, and a half-million kilograms of ammunition.

"When you fight terrorism, you can't have a victory characteristic of conventional war because there is no uniform, no front, no army. The only way we have to stop terrorism is to hit terrorists hard."

He called Hamas "the greatest Arab problem."

Asked whether he thinks the terror group will continue attacking Israel, Peres said: "They won't do it so quickly. I hope the lesson will serve as a deterrent." (Two days later, Israeli aircraft struck at tunnels used for smuggling goods and weapons on the border between Gaza and Egypt).

In a short address, Likud leader and prime ministerial front-runner Benjamin Netanyahu said he has "no doubt that ultimately, militant Islam will lose the battle against modernity and freedom. The question is, at what price?"

He called for a broad alliance with Christians and moderate Muslims against anti-Semitism and "the creed of hate."

In his address, Lauder blasted the world's "double standard" in criticizing Israel's Gaza operation.

"How long would your governments wait if you were threatened, not just by words that promised your destruction, but by real rockets?" he asked. "When I look at the double standards the world applied to Jews, I come to the sad conclusion that with anti-Semitism, the best we can hope for is that it goes away for a time."

The anti-Semitism facing European Jews "is as bad as it's ever been," but "we will defend ourselves. We will not waver," he said.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak, who was well received, called the blow against Gaza the "toughest" ever carried out by the Jewish state. He said 150 tunnels used for arms smuggling were destroyed, along with 250 buildings used by extremists and more than 100 rocket launch pads.

Barak, a former prime minister, said he "strongly believes no other country would have had such patience for so long" as Israel did. "We are not trigger-happy or looking for wars," he added. "I have been through too many to be looking for wars."

Several delegates spoke of increased anti-Semitism in their countries. The envoy from Turkey related that hundreds of thousands of people in Istanbul attended an anti-Israel rally.

At the plenary CJC co-president Rabbi Reuven Bulka, left, chats with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

Rabbi Henry Sobel of Congregation Sao Paulo Israelite in Brazil was forthright. He called Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who ejected Israel's ambassador from his country, an anti-Semite, and he noted a worrying trend of anti-Semitism across South America.

Probably the best-received speaker was foreign minister Tzipi Livni, the Kadima party's candidate for prime minister in the Feb. 10 election. In a short, direct address, Livni, to wide applause, said that Israel is "not going to show restraint anymore."

An agreement with Hamas "is not an option. We need to change the rules of the game until they learn that the rules have changed and the equation has changed," she added.

"We are not trying to avoid negotiations. We are trying to do it the right way."

Canadians voted en bloc against two controversial resolutions, which both passed. One dealt with the recent decision by Pope Benedict to reverse the excommunication of a British bishop who openly denies the Holocaust. It called on the pontiff to "strengthen and reinforce the achievements of Jewish-Catholic dialogue thereby assisting to counter the adverse impression arising from the decision concerning Bishop [Richard] Williamson."

Rabbi Bulka said the resolution missed the point. "To welcome back a Holocaust denier flies in the face of elementary decency and is a travesty," he told The CJN. "The Pope has to make a clear statement addressing and redressing the damage that this decision has caused."

The other resolution dealt with the followup to the UN's 2001 anti-racism conference, known as Durban II, slated for later this year. Moments after Livni encouraged countries to boycott Durban II, the measure called on Jewish communities around the world to pressure their governments to ensure that the conference is not a replay of the 2001 parley, which descended into a chorus of anti-Israel sentiment. Failing that, the resolution encouraged governments to stay away from the conference.

Rabbi Bulka said the Canadian delegation was "firmly behind the government of Canada," which announced a year ago that it would not attend Durban II. "They saw long before now where this sham is going. They have been proven correct."

"To suggest that one can minimize the racism and hate that will be present at the conference is like saying that instead of much poison, we can settle for a little less poison."

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Papal decision concerns Canadian Jewish Congress

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Canadian Jewish Congress is among Jewish groups worldwide expressing concern that Pope Benedict's decision to lift an excommunication order against a bishop who doubts the accuracy of facts about the Holocaust could negatively affect Catholic-Jewish relations.

In a statement last week, Congress called on local Catholic leaders to speak out against the decision.

Late last month, the Pope revoked an excommunication order against four bishops who were part of a Catholic faction that rejects the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, which introduced reforms to improve relations with Jews.

The Pope's move is seen as an attempt to bring the bishops back into the Catholic fold, as long as they accept the authority of Church teachings.

Rabbi Reuven Bulka

Among the four is Bishop Richard Williamson, who has said he doubts the accuracy of the accepted history of the Holocaust.

"I believe that the historical evidence is hugely against six million Jews having been deliberately gassed in gas chambers as a deliberate policy of Adolf Hitler," Bishop Williamson said in an interview with Swedish television that aired just days before the papal ruling and the International Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust on Jan. 27.

"I believe there were no gas chambers," Bishop Williamson added.

"I think that 200- to 300,000 Jews perished in Nazi concentration camps… but none of them by gas chambers."

Canadian Jewish Congress urged the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) to condemn the Pope's decision to lift the excommunication.

"We call on the leadership of the Catholic Church in Canada to follow the lead of bishops in France, Belgium and Germany, among other countries, in denouncing the Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism of Bishop Williamson and in reaffirming in no uncertain terms that such hateful views have no place in the Church," CJC co-president Rabbi Reuven Bulka said.

"Indeed, we call upon all Catholics in Canada, on the pulpit and from the pew, to join in this denunciation."

Other Jewish groups, including the Anti-Defamation League and B'nai Brith International, have also criticized Bishop Williamson for his comments about the Holocaust.

As well, the Pope's move prompted the Israeli Chief Rabbinate to break its ties with the Vatican and suspend an annual interfaith meeting with Catholic leaders, scheduled for next month in Jerusalem.

In response to calls from the Jewish community, the CCCB released a statement that said it "finds abhorrent the notion that somehow the terrible evil of the Holocaust is not a fact of history and joins the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI in calling on all people to recognize that the Holocaust is 'an admonition against oblivion, negation and reductionism.'"

The CCCB said it rejects Bishop Williamson's comments and added that he "has been forbidden to speak further on this question."

The CCCB said it remains "committed to dialogue with the Jews."

Speaking with The CJN, CCCB president James Weisgerber, the Archbishop of Winnipeg, said the Pope's decision on Bishop Williamson was made so that the Pope would be in a better position to preside over him.

"If he is outside the Church, there is nothing we can do about it, but when he is in the Church, then he has to deal with this stuff," Archbishop Weisgerber said.

But, he added, everyone was shocked by Bishop Williamson's statements.

"It is very clear that this view is not only unaccepted, but it is completely idiotic."

Following CJC's call to the CCCB to respond, Rabbi Bulka met with Papal Nuncio Luigi Ventura, the Vatican's ambassador to Canada, to convey the concerns of the Jewish community.

CJC spokesperson Jordan Kerbel said Ventura made a commitment that he would visit with the Pope and express the concerns of the Canadian Jewish community.

"We explicitly asked the nuncio to convey to the Vatican that [Bishop] Williamson must publicly renounce his odious views before being granted full communion and welcomed back into the Church," Rabbi Bulka said in a statement.

With files from JTA.

Israel responds to rocket attacks

— please see page 41

Israel Briefs

Schalit alive, Sarkozy says

After speaking with French President Nicolas Sarkozy the father of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit said he has hope for the release of his son from Gaza. Noam Schalit made the remarks Jan. 27 after being summoned to see Sarkozy. Schalit told reporters in Paris that Sarkozy assured him his son is alive and that France is "using every means available" to free him. The soldier has dual French-Israeli citizenship.

Israel strikes back in Gaza

The Israeli Air Force targeted a Gaza man in response to the launching of a Qassam rocket into Sderot. It was the second rocket attack on Israel and the second retaliatory attack in less than 24 hours. Israel's Jan. 29 air strike targeted Machmad Uda Chamdan Samiri, 25, a known terror operative of the Global Jihad, the Israel Defence Forces said. Samiri was wounded in the strike. Following a rocket attack on southern Israel on Jan. 28, Israel launched a successful aerial attack against a weapons-making facility in Rafah, the IDF said.

U.S focus narrows

The Obama administration's focus on Israeli-Arab peace is solely on the Palestinian track for now, Hillary Rodham Clinton said in her first news briefing as U.S. secretary of state. She was asked Jan. 27 about her earlier pledges to advance Israel-Syria talks. She said the focus now is appropriately on the new special envoy to the Israel-Palestinian talks, George Mitchell, and his visit last week to the region.

– Files from JTA

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Torontonian aids Yad Vashem expansion project

By MARK ELLIOTT SHAPIRO
Israel Correspondent

JERUSALEM — Another milestone has been passed on the road to continued education about – and greater understanding of – the Holocaust, and a member of Toronto's Jewish community is part of that story.

Joseph Gottdenker, a philanthropist and Holocaust survivor who serves on the boards of several Jewish non-profits, is a Yad Vashem benefactor who recently donated seed money to build a new international seminars wing at Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies.

Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, is located on Har Hazikaron, the Mount of Remembrance, adjacent to Mount Herzl.

A ceremony was held there Jan. 19 to lay the cornerstone for the new wing. Some 60 educators from nearly 20 countries attended the event, as did 26 ambassadors.

During the Holocaust, a Polish police officer, Wladyslaw Ziolo, provided asylum to Gottdenker and his mother, Bina. When it became too dangerous for Bina to remain, Ziolo provided her with false identity papers, helping her to escape with the Polish underground.

The Ziolo family protected Joe, raising him as their own child for almost three years. After the war, Joe, with the help of his uncle, David Zuckerbrot, was reunited with his parents in Germany.

The Gottdenkers spent three years in Germany as displaced persons before immigrating to the United States in 1948. Ten years later, they moved to Canada. Joe attended high school in Toronto and university in London, Ont.

"I was born into a world where whole Jewish communities, built up over centuries, were destroyed mercilessly without a second thought," he told attendees in his address, which stressed the importance of Holocaust education.

"We must ensure the tragedies of the past do not repeat themselves in the lives of our children and grandchildren. We must ensure the memory of every person who perished in the Holocaust is preserved, and that their stories are told, so that the lessons of the Holocaust will resound the world over," he said.

"Yad Vashem recognizes this responsibility and stands at the forefront of Holocaust commemoration and education."

He added that "Yad Vashem is without a doubt the most influential and active institution in safeguarding the memory of the Holocaust."

"As a Holocaust survivor, I know only too well the human capacity for evil. I believe the only way to rise above this evil is through education. It is not enough for us to remember the Holocaust in our hearts. To truly honour the memory of those who perished, we must ensure that they and the Shoah are remembered in the hearts of the third generation and the fourth generation and every generation to come."

From left, Yaron Ashekanzi, executive director of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem and Joseph Gottdenker, with his children, Debbie and Adam, join Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, chairman of the Yad Vashem Council; Avner Shalev, chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, and Canadian Ambassador Jon Allen at the cornerstone-laying ceremony for a new international seminars wing at Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies.
[*Yossi Ben David/Yad Vashem photo*]

One of the educators taking part in Yad Vashem's winter seminar program, Canadian Steven Van Zoost, an English teacher at Avon View High School in Windsor, N.S., also spoke at the ceremony.

Van Zoost said that he "had three reasons for attending the winter seminar.

"First, I wanted to learn about how to teach the Holocaust other than as a series of dates and consequences for Jewish people… Secondly, I wanted to learn about modern Israel, and this seminar has helped me through lectures, but also through experiences outside of our classes… Finally, my third reason for attending this seminar was that I wanted to promote Holocaust education within my profession, something that I will continue to do through professional publications and my university teaching with other teachers."

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CJN Profile

Godfrey returns to the media after stint with Jays

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Paul Godfrey, the new president and chief executive officer of the Toronto-based National Post, was in a joking mood when a reporter walked into his office early one afternoon last month.

"I'm still looking for the washrooms and where the bodies are buried," he quipped, grinning.

Striking a more serious tone, he expressed confidence that he can fulfil his mandate and put the National Post – founded by Conrad Black in 1998 – on the road to profitability.

"I hope my appointment will dispel rumours that the Post is closing. I wouldn't have taken this job if I thought so. People feed on gossip. We know that."

Godfrey, who turned 70 on the cold, snowy day he was interviewed, was hired to achieve that objective by Leonard Asper, the president of Canwest Global Communications Corp., Canada's largest media empire.

He arrived at the Post from the Toronto Blue Jays baseball club, where he had been president and CEO for the past eight years. "I had indicated to him [Asper] that I was leaving the Blue Jays and did want to retire. He asked, 'Would you like to run the Post?'"

Godfrey was gung-ho. "I'd always had a love for newspapers," he said.

No one in the business was really surprised by Asper's decision to tap Godfrey. Prior to his stint with the Jays, Godfrey was publisher of the Toronto Sun and chief executive of Sun Media Corp. At Sun Media Corp., one of his tasks was to make the Financial Post profitable. Within three years, he had achieved his goal.

And now, at the National Post, he is determined to repeat his success.

"I've honestly felt that the Post is an important voice in Canada. I want to ensure that its longevity is preserved, that its revenue base – advertising and circulation – is strong and that the editorial product is accurate, fair and opinionated."

Godfrey, however, has no illusions.

"The Post is not in the black right now, but the situation is not as critical as many people have painted it to be," said Godfrey, whose office faces the newsroom. "The Post is much better off than most people think. It's nowhere near where people think it is. With some fine-tuning and effort, the Post will be around for decades. We're a solid read. We have the talent and determination to succeed. To use a baseball analogy, we can hit a home run."

He added, "The Post can make a contribution to Canwest in a short period of time."

Although he was not given a contract when he signed on, he is hardly worried. "I'm way beyond retirement age," said Godfrey, who's in fine form and works out several times a week.

"I'll do it as long as we're both happy. I've always enjoyed everything I've done," said Godfrey, who recently returned from a lengthy vacation at his Florida condo. "I've always had fun jobs."

Paul Godfrey in his office at the National Post *[Sheldon Kirshner photo]*

The son of Philip, a scrap dealer, and Bess, a political campaign manager, he was born in Toronto and raised in the Kensington Market neighbourhood.

A graduate of Bathurst Heights Secondary School and the University of Toronto (chemical engineering), he launched his career in industry. Then, thanks to his mother's influence, he segued into local politics as a North York alderman.

In 1973, he was appointed chair of Metropolitan Toronto, a position he held until 1984. In this capacity, he was instrumental in bringing the Blue Jays to Toronto. "I had always been a sports fan," he said.

Taking credit for having helped transform Toronto into what he described as "North America's safest and most livable city," Godfrey groused that the city has since fallen on harder times. "The halo has slipped. It bothers me to see new and higher taxes and less services. It's not the city it once was. It's time for younger people to step forward."

As he remembers, he was "totally dumbfounded" when Doug Creighton, one of the founders of the Toronto Sun, asked him to be its new publisher. "He wanted me because I was high-profile and could bring respectability and people skills to the Sun," he explained.

"Certain parts of the job – advertising and circulation – were easy," Godfrey recalled. "But convincing the editorial people that a former politician was their boss was harder. I had to convince them that I didn't want to spin the news, and that took two to three years."

When Godfrey reported for duty in 1984, the Sun was widely considered brash and outspoken. "It was viewed as a racy newspaper," he said, referring to its photographs of scantily-clad Sunshine Girls.

Never one to ignore demographics, Godfrey did not throw out that popular feature, but he did upgrade the quality of the Sun by hiring what he calls respectable journalists and columnists.

"The Sun gained a major degree of respectability in the community. We broke news stories, and we were second to none in sports coverage. We changed the approach rather than the culture of the Sun."

Leaving the Sun, Godfrey reinvented himself as the Blue Jays' chief executive officer. Ted Rogers, the communications mogul, recruited him in 2000, the year he bought the team. With Godfrey at the helm, the payroll was increased and the SkyDome was purchased, but the Blue Jays never finished better than second place in the American League.

Reflecting on the team's singular inability to rise to the very top, he mused, "Sure I was disappointed. Every team thinks it can win, but in reality it's hard to win unless you spend a lot more money than you can make."

Still, Godfrey was an avid fan, attending every home game and a quarter of the out-of-town contests and watching the rest on television.

"My wife didn't sue me for divorce," he chuckled.

Now, at the Post, Godfrey has dispensed with the scruffy beard he wore for about seven years. "It was time for a new look, which is similar to the old look," he said.

Saying that journalism has changed dramatically since his days at the Sun, Godfrey talked about the emergence of the Internet and digital newspapers.

Although he fears that the Internet will gradually erode newspaper circulation, he believes that ink-on-paper dailies will survive.

"Most people love the portability and comfort of a hands-on newspaper. People have been predicting the demise of the newspaper since the advent of radio and TV. But newspapers are basically content providers and will survive."

As president of the Post, he revels in the knowledge that he can have an impact on the local, provincial and national level.

But Godfrey, a Conservative party loyalist, has no intention of returning to politics in the future.

"I don't think so," said Godfrey, the father of three grown sons. "I have no desire to go back to it, though I've been encouraged to run provincially and federally. I was always content with my life in Toronto."

Godfrey – who sits on the boards of Baycrest and Mount Sinai Hospital, and whose wife Gina is associated with the Jerusalem Foundation – still hopes to bring a National Football League franchise to Toronto.

"Toronto is one of the missing components of the NFL," said Godfrey, who is certain that both an NFL and a Canadian Football League team can coexist here. "Toronto is a great sports city."

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
President

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TJFF serves up tea and two very different films

Bernie Reubens (Gregg Sulkin) with his mother Esther played by Helena Bonham Carter.

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

The Toronto Jewish Film Festival wraps up its Chai Tea & a Movie program with two more movies in the next few weeks, one in Toronto and the other in its new Richmond Hill location.

Set in England in 1966, Sixty Six, starring Helena Bonham Carter, is an enjoyable movie for the whole family.

Bernie Reubens hates everything about his life. His father eats dinner in his underwear and refuses to drive over 25 miles an hour. Bernie's older brother bullies him both at school and at home. One day at the beach, his parents forget all about him and leave him behind.

The only thing he is looking forward to is starting a new life as a man on his bar mitzvah day, nine months away.

The way he sees it, his bar mitzvah is going to be huge – "the Jesus Christ of bar mitzvahs." It's going to be a legend. It will be held at the best hotel, there will be 350 present-bearing guests, and even crooner Frankie Vaughan will be there. More importantly, he himself will be the centre of attention.

But there are a few snags along the way. His dad's grocery store is losing customers to the big supermarket that just opened up the street. Money is tight and they just can't afford the lavish event Bernie's older brother got.

And to make it worse, his bar mitzvah is planned for July 30. This is the day of the World Cup final, which England is hosting that year. If England, always an underdog, makes it to the final, no one will come to his bar mitzvah.

Bernie's only hope is that England doesn't make it past the first round. "Don't worry," his blind rabbi tells him. "England never gets to the final."

Bernie takes to chanting voodoo curses at the English team, and sending letters to the team's manager threatening him if he picks certain good players. At synagogue, he prays to God for the English players to get a bout of diarrhea during the games.

Does England make the final? If you don't know, I won't tell you, except to say English soccer fans today still talk about 1966 the way Toronto Maple Leaf fans talk about 1967.

Sixty Six is a fun, light-hearted coming-of-age film. It is being screened on Feb. 15 at the Sheppard Grande Theatre, 4861 Yonge St.

* * *

Two Ladies (Dans La Vie) is a French movie about tolerance. It was screened at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2007.

The film is set in a city in the south of France during the Second Lebanon War. Esther, an elderly Jewish lady, is confined to a wheelchair. Her son, a neurologist, hires Selima, a young, well-assimilated Muslim woman, to be her nurse. Esther, he tells her, is temperamental and might be hard to deal with. In fact, shortly afterward, she fires her housekeeper/companion for being too boring for her.

In a bind, the son accepts Selima's offer to have her mother, Halima, take care of Esther during the day.

Halima appears to be prejudiced and anti-Israeli. Watching the news of the Lebanon war that is taking place, she flips the bird at the Israeli troops on her screen. But she accepts Selima's job offer. She needs the money to be able to make the pilgrimage to Mecca once before she dies, as is every Muslim's duty.

Seems like a recipe for disaster: a bitter, angry Jewish woman and an anti-Israeli Muslim woman.

But, as this sentimental movie shows, rivals can get along. The two ladies find out they're both originally from Algeria and have much in common. Soon, they become best friends.

But it's not easy for Halima. She becomes the shame of her neighbourhood. Her neighbours criticize her and complain that she is going to Mecca with Jewish sin money.Even her other children want her to give up the job. In despair, she asks her imam for help. He tells her that on the contrary, even Mohammed made deals with Jews.

Two Ladies is a warm-hearted movie about tolerance and open-mindedness. It screens at the Silver City in Richmond Hill, 8725 Yonge St. on March 1.

For both movies, tea is at 1 p.m., movie at 2 p.m. Tickets are $15 each. For Sixty Six only, one ticket also allows admission for two children under 12. Tickets can be bought at the door or by calling 416-967-1528.

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Arts & Travel

Artist Iris Häussler addresses the crowd at the opening of her exhibit at Honest Ed's called Honest Threads.

Art installation allows you to walk in Ed Mirvish's shoes

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

Tucked away in a small red gallery on the second floor of the Honest Ed's store is Iris Häussler's art installation, Honest Threads. The exhibit of clothing, framed photos and a description of the memories they carry drew a crowd of 350 people to the recent opening.

Presented by Koffler Centre of the Arts, the installation includes 105 framed photos of people wearing cherished garments, with personal stories underneath, as well as a display of those garments and others, all lent by Torontonians. Visitors can even take some of the clothes home to wear for a few days and thus share in the experience.

Honest Threads seems at home in Toronto's landmark Honest Ed's – after all, with its charming collection of celebrity photos and memorabilia, the store is more than a bargain hunter's paradise.

Häussler is known for installing work in unique locations. In 2006, she chose a downtown Toronto house for her project The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach, based on a fictional artist who filled his home with sculptures.

While she continues to create characters and environments that reveal past histories, both fictional and real, she's also interested in what makes people individuals.

"The roots of Honest Threads lie in what shapes our identity. Clothing is a small part of that," Häussler told The CJN before the opening reception. "I originally developed this project 14 years ago in Germany on the Polish-German border, but it did not spark because it needed maintenance and care – it's built on trust of the people who share something when they generously lend a garment to someone who can care for it for a little while."

This time, Häussler's project received the necessary maintenance and care from the Koffler Centre. Honest Threads marks the Koffler Gallery's first off-site exhibition prior to its June closing while the new 40,000-square-foot Koffler Centre of the Arts is built – it's scheduled to be completed in 2011.

There to celebrate the exhibition's opening were Honest Ed's David and Audrey Mirvish, Koffler Centre chair of the board Tiana Koffler Boyman and executive director Lori Starr, and Art Gallery of Ontario CEO Matthew Teitelbaum.

Clothing on exhibit includes Ed Mirvish's patent leather shoes, and a hat and suede jacket belonging to Matthew Teitelbaum's late father, Mashel Teitelbaum, a Toronto artist for more than 30 years. In the accompanying photo, Mashel is seen wearing the hat in 1960, on the deck of a boat with his daughter, Mara, who submitted the clothing.

Lori Starr lent a beaded jacket she received from a 90-year-old friend when Starr moved from Los Angeles.

Another participant, Elizabeth Peereboom, lent Häussler her grandmother's blue dress given to Peereboom and her mother on a visit to the Soviet Union in the 1980s. The visit came 44 years after the Nazis forced Peereboom's mother, then a teenager, to leave home to work in Germany.

Peereboom writes, "Although the dress can't talk, we need to keep the stories alive of the people who precede us for those who come after."

What does Häussler plan to do with the framed pieces? "Till now, I have kept it a secret, but I will give each participant the framed picture back with their story. I'm not interested in harvesting these stories, I just set the frame for people to tell their stories."

Honest Threads runs until March 8. Admission is free at Honest Ed's, 581 Bloor St. W., 2nd floor, east wing. Closed Saturdays, statutory and Jewish holidays. For hours and more information, go to www.kofflerarts.org or call 416-636-1880, ext. 228.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

Helena Bonham Carter, left, stars in Sixty-Six, a coming-of-age comedy set in England during the World Cup of 1966. See review on page 34.

CBC DOCUMENTARY TELLS STORY OF INTERRUPTED LOVE

An upcoming CBC feature documentary, Love Interrupted, tells the story of two couples, including **Alfred** and **Isabel Bader**, who were torn apart by race, class and religion.

Alfred was sent to Canada in the first kindertransport from Vienna. He completed high school in Quebec, studied at Queen's University, and became a businessman, art dealer and philanthropist. He fell in love with Isabel in 1949 but broke up with her in 1950 because she did not feel she could convert to Judaism.

He married another woman (who converted to Judaism) and they had two sons, but he broke up his marriage after 30 years to return to Isabel. (The other couple in the documentary were kept apart because he was an Italian Catholic waiter and she was an English doctor's daughter.)

The theme of Love Interrupted is love and reconnection. It airs as a Valentine's Day special on Feb. 12, 9 p.m.

* * *

Theatre Notes

•Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre is preparing to stage a production in English of The Dybbuk, **S. Anski**'s famed Yiddish play of a century ago. The production features a cast of more than 20 actors, including **Howard Jerome**, **Mark Albert**, **Ron Boyd**, **Jonah Hundert** and **Sarah Illiatovitch-Goldman**. The director is **Ari Weisberg**. Leah Posluns Theatre, Feb. 25 to March 8. www.teatrontheatre.com. 416-781-5527

• Dancap Productions presents Happy Days: A New Musical, based on the popular TV show featuring the character Fonzie. Elgin Theatre, Feb. 3 to 15. For a special offer on tickets ($50 or $25) until Feb. 8, order online using code "ARNOLD" or by phone, 416-644-3665. www.dancaptickets.com/arnold

• Acting Up Stage Theatre Company presents the Toronto première of A New Brain, a musical by **William Finn** and **James Lapine** about a children's composer with a rare brain disorder, whose unwritten songs come to life in his hospital room. As usual, playwright Finn includes some aspect of his Jewish heritage in the story. The cast includes **Steven Gallagher**, **Barbara Barsky**, **Thom Allison**, **Juan Chioran**, **Allie Hughes**, **Steve Ross** and **Paula Wolfson.** The artistic producer is **Mitchell Marcus**. $25 to $40. Berkeley Street Theatre Downstairs. Feb. 12 to March 1. 416-368-3110, www.actingupstage.com

• Studio 5040 presents Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places: A Friday the 13th Valentines Cabaret with **Gabi Epstein** and **Patrick Brown.** "An evening of seriously cynical songs and sad but true horror stories for anyone who has followed the rocky road to love." $15. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre, 5040 Yonge St. Feb. 13 (one night only). Doors and cabaret-style bar open 7:15 p.m., show starts 8:15. 416-872-1111, www.studio5040cabarets.com

* * *

Arts in Brief

• The Winchevsky Centre and Toronto's Secular Jewish Community School present a Tu b'Shvat celebration featuring Toronto singer-songwriter **Chris McKhool**'s environmental songs and activities. Also includes a secular humanistic Tu b'Shvat seder. Admission $7 includes refreshments. 585 Cranbrooke Ave., Sunday, Feb. 8, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. 416-789-5502, www. winchevsky.org

• The Winterfolk Roots and Blues Festival features more than 80 artists performing roots and blues music in four venues over three days. Artists include **Danny Marks**, **Dave Borins**, **Mose Scarlett**, **Treasa Levasseur**, **Bob Snider**, **Al Lerman**, **Noah Zacharin**, **Howard Gladstone** and artistic director **Brian Gladstone**. The venues are at the corner of Danforth and Broadview avenues and most events are free. Feb. 13 to 15. www.winterfolk.com

• The Toronto Jewish Film Festival's Chai Tea & A Movie series continues with a screening of Sixty Six (UK, 2006), director **Paul Weiland**'s family film about a boy whose bar mitzvah overlaps with a soccer World Cup with England in the championship. The film skilfully re-creates the era of 1966 and features a terrific cast that includes **Helena Bonham Carter**. Sheppard Grande Theatre, 4861 Yonge St. Sunday, Feb. 15. Tea 1 p.m., film 2 p.m. One purchased adult ticket includes two children free admissions. 416-967-1528, www.tjff.com

* * *

At the Galleries

• Honest Threads, an exhibition by Toronto artist **Iris Haussler**, is an interactive installation that relates intimate stories about the lending and borrowing of personal garments and the memories they carry. The works are presently on view at Honest Ed's department store, 2nd floor east wing, 581 Bloor St. at Bathurst.

• Rouge Contemporary Projects presents its first major exhibition, **Judy Chicago**: A Survey of Important Works, featuring test plates, goddess sculptures and drawings that led up to her groundbreaking work, The Dinner Party. This exhibition of more than 100 works, most never seen before in Canada, runs from Feb. 10 to March 22. Opening reception. Feb. 14, 2 to 5 p.m. 732 Queen St. E. 416-778-0555

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Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. One entry per person!

The CJN will not enter into any correspondence with contestants.

Send your entry to: ***"Children"*** at **contest@cjnews.com**, or by mail to The Canadian Jewish News, 1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205, North York, Ont. M3B 3K4 or fax to: 416-391-0949.

Employees and family members of The CJN and Chai Lifeline are not eligible to enter.

Duo follows the yellow brick road to charity

By ADAM MICHAEL SEGAL
Special to The CJN

People with multiple passions often lament they don't have enough time to pursue all of them.

But for Eric Weisz and Jason Spetter, the limits of the 24-hour clock don't seem to matter. Indeed, these luminaries always make time for their passions, especially since doing so benefits so many others.

By day, they are immersed in the demanding corporate world. Weisz toils as managing director of The Effort Trust Company, while Spetter is a lawyer at Lipman, Zener & Wazman LLP.

By night, they are co-founders of Fallen Rock Productions, which develops musical theatre productions to benefit charities.

"It's amazing what you can do when you're motivated," says Spetter, 36. "We both love our jobs and we are also passionate about the theatre and giving back, so we find the time to do it all."

Since 2003, Fallen Rock has donated over $250,000 to various charitable causes through its theatrical productions, including Moulin Rouge, West Side Story, Little Shop of Horrors, Grease, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, and Beauty and the Beast.

This year, executive producer Weisz, artistic director Spetter and their growing cast and crew will be presenting the Wizard of Oz from Feb. 18-22 at the Isabel Bader Theatre in Toronto.

"The Wizard of Oz is a timeless classic," says Weisz. "It's great for audiences of all ages."

The cast of Wizard of Oz in rehearsal. Proceeds go to a children's charity.

All proceeds will go towards the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario (POGO), which is dedicated to Ontario's children with cancer, working towards equal access to state-of-the-art diagnosis, treatment, care and optimal quality of life.

"POGO is a very compelling cause," says Weisz, 37. "We are extremely happy to be helping them out."

Although this is the seventh year Fallen Rock has put on its show, the company's history goes back to the mid-1980s, when Weisz and Spetter were campers at Wahanowin near Orillia, Ont.

"I was a really shy kid at camp, but they were casting for a camp production of A Chorus Line and the director really pushed me to play a particular role," recalls Spetter.

"When I delivered my lines, the laughter from the audience caught me right away. From that moment, I was in love with theatre."

Weisz also nurtured a love for the stage at camp and many years later, the two reconnected at Osgoode Hall Law School, where in true thespian fashion, they participated in a mock trial production.

After law school, they decided to parlay their theatrical talents into a production company that would perform solely to benefit good causes.

"I grew up in a family that was very philanthropic and that made me see how important it is to give back to the community," notes Weisz, who is also involved with the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Mount Sinai Hospital and other causes.

Spetter was also brought up with a deep social consciousness and community focus.

"My grandmother, who passed away at the age of 98 in 2007, was a big inspiration to me," he says. "She never had much money, but always found a way to give back, no matter what. Even though she didn't have a car, she still volunteered with Meals on Wheels, taking a bus to do all the deliveries."

Spetter notes he is trying to set a similar example for his two daughters, aged two and four, about the importance of supporting and building community.

In addition to the delight of the audiences and POGO, Fallen Rock is serving another integral purpose as a breeding ground for up and coming actors.

"Emerging artists look to Fallen Rock in order to further their careers," says Weisz. "As we have grown and gained exposure, we provide these artists with a chance to perform and get noticed by casting directors and producers. And we have been a real springboard for them to do that."

Actors who have appeared in Fallen Rock performances have gone on to professional endeavours at Mirvish Productions, the Shaw Festival and Stratford.

Tickets for the Wizard of Oz are available at www.uofttix.ca or by calling 416-978-8849.

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Berr's Holocaust diary is a jolting testament

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Helene Berr was born on March 27, 1921, in Paris and died on April 10, 1945, in Bergen-Belsen, only five days before the British army liberated this wretched concentration camp.

Hers was a life nipped in the bud by the forces of fanaticism and racism.

One of five children born to a prosperous, assimilated Jewish middle-class family, she was a student of English literature at the Sorbonne.

Whatever dreams and ambitions she had were shattered by Germany's occupation of France.

On April 7, 1942, she began to keep a diary. She stopped writing on Nov. 28, 1942, and resumed her entries on Aug. 25, 1943.

On March 7, 1944, a few months prior to France's liberation, she and her parents, Raymond and Antoinette, were arrested, deported to the Drancy transit camp and shipped to Auschwitz.

She survived, though her parents were murdered. But in November of that year, she was transferred to Bergen-Belsen, where she contracted typhus. Unable to get up from her bunk for reveille, she was brutally beaten to death.

Fortunately, Berr entrusted her diary – which has been compared to Anne Frank's – to a family employee, who in turn gave it to Berr's fiancé.

The English-language version, The Journal of Helene Berr (McClelland & Stewart) has now been published. A portrait of a sensitive woman and a dark era, it is a diary dripping with tragedy.

In one of her first entries, she complains about the abnormal situation Jews like herself face. "I am fed up with not being normal. I am fed up with no longer feeling as free as air."

A beautiful spring day, as well as a leisurely walk to a bookshop, alleviate her sorrow. But Berr is soon plunged into a state of despair, depressed by the news that Jews are obliged to wear the dreaded yellow star and that a friend's father has died in a concentration camp. As she writes: "The thought of that death haunted me and turned everything else into nothing."

Berr expresses indignation that Jews have been subjected to anti-Semitic restrictions. They are no longer entitled to cross the Champs-Elysees and frequent theatres and restaurants. "I boiled over with such rage that I had to... calm myself down," she notes.

Told that a new roundup of Jews is imminent, she writes, "A wave of terror has been gripping everybody... It appears that the SS have taken command in France and that terror must follow."

Berr reports that "factory girls" have requested permission to marry their Jewish boyfriends so they can stave off deportation. She also says that "people on the street" regard her with sympathy and compassion.

The deportations, however, do not cease: "Mme. Carpentier saw two goods trains at Drancy in which men and women had been stacked like cattle, without even any straw, for deportation."

At various times, she expresses deep frustration over her fate.

"Lefschetz gave a lecture about the Jewish Question which drove me to increasing exasperation. What he said about the Jewish nation, and this is true, was that we did not know why we were being persecuted because we had lost our traditions and had to return to the ghetto. No, I do not belong to the Jewish race."

Judaism, she maintains, is a religion, not a racial category.

Berr reprises that theme in a much later entry: "I do not feel different from other people. I will never think of myself as a member of a separate human group, and perhaps that is why I suffer so much, because I do not understand it at all. I suffer from the spectacle of human beastliness."

Rejecting Zionism, she compares it to "hideous fanatical Germanism," a comparison that readers will question. Berr's naievety also surfaces when she protests that 25 Jewish families have been arrested "without the slightest reason."

Likening her plight to a traveller lost in a desert, she says, "Nobody will ever know what this summer and autumn have been for me. Nobody will ever know, because I have carried on living... But not a single one of my deep thoughts ... hasn't been a source of pain. I've not suffered physically yet... But in my soul, in my affections and in a general sense, I have lived and am living in perpetual pain."

Helene Berr in 1942

Berr can't quite comprehend the scope and madness of Nazi policy. As she puts it, "we talked about Mme. Samuel. In the end, she was deported. She had been left behind because she was a half-Jew and a pregnant mother. But they deported her from the clinic in a hospital car; that cannot be true."

In a heart-rending entry, she wonders whether the world will ever be able to understand what it was like to live through "this appalling tempest when you are ready to grasp life's beauty."

At the Place de la Concorde, passing a group of Germans, she observes, "Without knowing what they are doing, those men have deprived... Europe of joie de vivre. They clashed so sharply with the fragile and luminous beauty of Paris: men capable of committing such horrors... men of a race that has spawned the Nazi leaders who have gone so far in self-abasement, despiritualization and stupidity as to become no more than brainless automata..."

Later, she adds, "Nowadays, and this is new, when I see a German man or woman, I notice, with amazement, that a wave of anger rises up inside me, I want to strike them. For me, they have become the people perpetrating the evil I come up against every minute."

In a similar vein, she muses, "There can be no security for Europe so long as German imperialism has not been uprooted."

Having noted that there are not many Jews left in Paris after all the roundups, Berr succumbs to pessimism. "We don't have much prospect of keeping out of the way, because we won't be tipped off," she writes.

Although she does not fear the future, she realizes she may be fooling herself. "I said I was not afraid. But I wonder whether that is only out of ignorance, from not knowing the suffering to be endured, not knowing how far my resistance will go."

Berr, in her bones, has internalized her fate. "I know that if we are taken I will be deported separately from my parents and that the separation will be atrociously painful for all of us, above and beyond the fact of being deported."

As she waits for the inevitable, she reports that the Jews of Bordeaux have been arrested.

And so it goes in The Journal of Helene Berr, yet one more jolting testament in the annals of the Holocaust.

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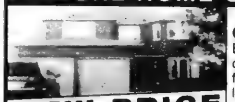

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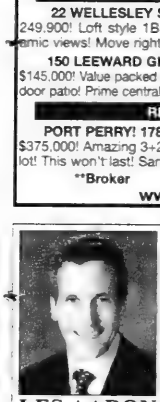

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Israel & the Jewish World

Israel responds to rocket attacks

JTA

JERUSALEM — Israel's Air Force struck several targets in Gaza in response to new rocket barrages on southern Israel.

Earlier Sunday, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Israel would launch a "disproportionate" response to the new rocket fire on the country's southern border.

The targets of Israel's retaliatory strike included six smuggling tunnels and a Hamas outpost, according to a statement from an Israel Defence Forces spokesperson.

"As the sole authority in the Gaza Strip, Hamas bears full responsibility for all terrorism originating within its area of control," the statement said.

Israel had sent telephone warnings to civilians in the area to vacate before the strikes, according to reports.

Two Israeli soldiers and one civilian were injured Sunday afternoon after five mortar shells were fired from Gaza at the western Negev. Later Sunday evening, a Qassam rocket was fired from Gaza into the western Negev.

At least four Qassam rockets were fired from Gaza into the western Negev shortly before 7 a.m. Sunday. One of the rockets landed between two kindergartens, according to reports. Four mortar shells were launched later in the morning but caused no damage.

Also Sunday morning, Palestinian gunmen fired on Israeli soldiers near the border fence close to the Kissufim crossing. The soldiers returned fire, and there were no injuries.

A long-range Grad rocket struck south of Ashkelon on Saturday morning. Residents were alerted with a Colour Red siren.

Olmert addressed the renewed violence, in violation of a Jan. 18 ceasefire declared by Hamas following a unilateral ceasefire declared by Israel, at the beginning of Sunday's regular cabinet meeting.

Olmert said "the cabinet's position from the outset was that if firing continues against residents of the south, there would be a sharp Israeli response that would be disproportional vis-a-vis the firing at residents of the State of Israel and at our forces. We will not go back to the rules of the game that the terrorist organizations tried to dictate in the past. We will act according to new rules that will ensure that we are not dragged into an unending shooting war on the southern border that denies southern residents a normal life."

The prime minister added, "I asked Defence Minister Ehud Barak to instruct the IDF, as his position requires, to prepare an Israeli response that is required by the circumstances that have been created as a result of this firing. Such an Israeli action and such an Israeli response will come at a time and place of our choosing. We will not warn the terrorist elements in advance as to how, where and when we will respond, but we will respond. This must be unequivocally clear."

Hamas agrees to one-year truce

JTA

JERUSALEM — Hamas has agreed to a year-long Gaza truce with Israel proposed by Egypt, an Arabic TV network reported.

The Dubai-based Al-Arabiya satellite network reported Sunday that Hamas representatives would give the ruling terrorist organization's final answer to the Egyptian initiative in Cairo on Monday.

According to the Al-Arabiya report, Hamas agreed to the deployment of Palestinian Authority (PA) troops at Gaza border crossings, who will co-ordinate with Hamas. The report said the truce would begin Thursday.

Israeli officials did not confirm the report, according to Israel Radio.

PA President Mahmoud Abbas cancelled a planned trip to the Czech Republic and was scheduled to leave Monday for Cairo.

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Vancouver skater waiting for next shot with Islanders

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Trevor Smith is hoping, no, make that expecting, that the five-game audition he enjoyed with the New York Islanders will turn out to be more than the proverbial cup of coffee in the National Hockey League.

Trevor Smith

Smith, who toils in the American Hockey League with the Bridgeport Sound Tigers, was called up to the big club a few weeks ago for one home game and a four-game road trip. He believes he acquitted himself well, skating with the big boys, making plays and even popping in his first NHL goal in Calgary against Miikka Kiprusoff.

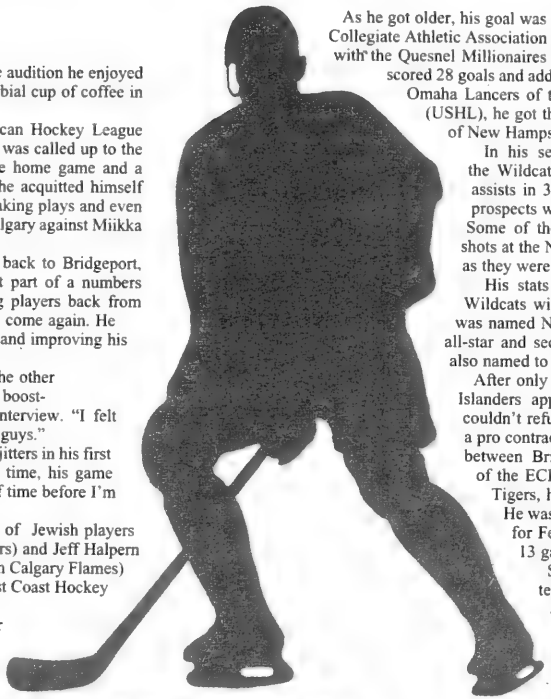
He was told before being sent back to Bridgeport, Conn., that his departure was just part of a numbers game – the Islanders were getting players back from injury – and that his chance would come again. He was advised to keep working hard and improving his game.

The Calgary game along with the other four were definitely "confidence boosters," Smith said in a telephone interview. "I felt speed-wise I could play with these guys."

Smith, 24, admits to early game jitters in his first NHL game but as he got more ice time, his game improved. "I feel it's just a matter of time before I'm back in the NHL," the six-foot-one, 195-pound left-winger said.

If he does make it back to Long Island, Smith will join a handful of Jewish players in the NHL. Apart from veterans Mathieu Schneider (Atlanta Thrashers) and Jeff Halpern (Tampa Bay Lightning), only Eric Nystrom and Mike Cammalleri (both Calgary Flames) round out the Jewish fraternity. You've got to look to the AHL and East Coast Hockey League (ECHL) to find the next batch of talented Jewish players.

Smith, who hails from North Vancouver, played most of his minor hockey on the West Coast. Coached by his dad, Harvey, he was pushed to improve more than the other players on his father's tyke and pee wee teams. It looks like it paid off, he said.



As he got older, his goal was to earn a scholarship to a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I team. His play with the Quesnel Millionaires got him noticed. In 44 games, he scored 28 goals and added 19 assists. After a year with the Omaha Lancers of the United States Hockey League (USHL), he got the call to play with the University of New Hampshire Wildcats.

In his second of only two seasons with the Wildcats, Smith scored 21 goals and 22 assists in 39 games. He quickly realized his prospects were not limited to college hockey. Some of the guys around him were getting shots at the NHL, and he knew he was as good as they were.

His stats backed him up. He helped the Wildcats win their sixth regular season title, was named NCAA All Hockey East first-team all-star and second-team all-American. He was also named to the New England all-star team.

After only two years of college hockey, the Islanders approached him with an offer he couldn't refuse – leave college early and sign a pro contract. Smith split the 2007-08 season between Bridgeport and the Utah Grizzlies of the ECHL. In 53 games with the Sound Tigers, he tallied 20 goals and 17 assists. He was named AHL rookie of the month for February after scoring 15 points in 13 games.

So far this year, he's leading the team in goals with 22 and he's added 14 helpers in 41 games.

His play, coupled with the Islanders' injury situation, prompted the summons. "To be called up was an unbelievable feeling," he said. In five games with the Islanders, he was teamed with Tim Jackman, Jon Sim and he even played some shifts with Doug Weight. He was at the rink in Phoenix when the long-serving centre scored his 1,000th point. The veteran player even offered some advice: "He told me to calm down and play my game. 'You're here for a reason,'" he recalled Weight saying.

Smith can remember some of the details of his first NHL tally, but it all happened so quickly, it remains mostly a blur.

He was coming down the right side when Jackman took a quick shot at Kiprusoff. The Calgary net-minder made the stop but was out of position for the rebound, which Smith gobbled up and put it into the mostly empty net. The crowd went wild – or at least his cheering section did, which consisted of his parents; his older brother, Derek; his cousin, who lives in Calgary; and a few friends.

Over the course of his NHL stint, Smith admits to experiencing rookie jitters. It took a while to settle down, and the Calgary experience was particularly memorable, as he grew up watching the likes of Kiprusoff and Jarome Iginla, he said.

Smith, who has visited Israel on a Birthright trip, believes it's not a matter of whether he'll return to the Islanders, it's a question of when. He now realizes he can skate and make plays at the NHL level, and with his skating ability, vision of the ice and grit, he believes he'd be an asset to the Islanders.

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Obama-mania

Ahhh. Obama-mania. I had my doubts about the man at first, and I made no secret about supporting U.S. presidential candidate Hilary Clinton in the Democratic race.

However, even I couldn't help but be swept up in the whirlwind of excitement surrounding Barack Obama's recent inauguration.

I know several people who trekked to Washington, D.C., for the momentous occasion, willing to freeze it out with millions of strangers, all for the thrill of being a part of history.

On the news, it was the young people whooping and wiping tears of joy that made for the best television.

But now that Obama-mania has settled down, I have to wonder if these young voters are still paying attention to what's happening in the White House.

It's easy enough to be engaged when you watch America's charming new president spinning his elegant wife around the stage floor, with Beyoncé wiping tears away in the background.

But young voters are traditionally apathetic to world politics, and it will be interesting to see if Obama's magnetism is enough to keep us drawn to the political stage.

Obama's biggest success so far has been in his ability to inspire hope in people who have always been hopeless – both hopelessly apathetic and hopelessly marginalized. But if he is to continue being a success, he's going to need to find a way to keep people excited and involved.

On one hand, there's no reason for us not to be engaged. America's deep recession has affected everyone around the world, across educational, economic and class lines. The War on Terror is constantly threatening to strike us here at home.

The role of the United States as a superpower is on the verge of a major shift, and whether America's influence over the world will continue to wane or will continue to be a thing of valour, remains to be seen.

There's no doubt about it, it's an exciting time. We are in the midst of a turning point in history.

But like all history lessons, the class is only as exciting as the teacher at the front of the class. Obama, with his catch phrases, succinct speaking style and Hollywood friends is certainly engaging, but I have a feeling that it will take something more to keep voters emotionally invested throughout his leadership.

It's hard to inspire change when you're constantly at an arm's length away. If he is truly the people's president, then he needs to make a concerted effort to dedicate a good portion of his time connecting with people on all levels of the economic ladder.

More speaking engagements at universities, more outreach in downtrodden communities…in short, more action on the front lines of society.

Not photo ops but opportunities to convince people that they, too, can effect change.

But more than that, it will take legitimacy. This president needs to walk the walk, plain and simple.

He's made a lot of promises and has talked a lot about change. People will need to see his actions and be convinced by the results to truly understand the importance of political will.

For years, politicians have been trying to find a way to capture people's attention. Obama's got a great head start, and I'd like to see him keep it.

This president has got a long road ahead of him and a lot of people are hoping he's got what it takes to truly make a change.

We'll just have to see if indeed, yes he can.

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About Life

Dear Ella,

About three months ago, our family began seeing signs that our father's reflexes and mind were showing significant signs of aging. Our dad has always been a strong and very intelligent man who could make the right decisions no matter how difficult the situation – until now.

He's in his 83rd year of life and he's still driving daily. He has always been an excellent driver who spent many hours a day behind the wheel, but I would also classify him as an aggressive driver who follows too close, changes lanes to get ahead, etc.

Now that his reflexes are not as sharp, we're quite worried for his safety and the safety of others. We are petrified to bring this up with him, but we have no choice. Do you have any suggestions on how this should be done?

Dangerous Driving

Dear Dangerous Driving,

The loss of the ability to drive is the loss of independence. Nobody wants to be told what they can and cannot do, but there has to be a balance between personal mobility and safety. Someone like your father, for whom driving has always been second nature, is especially vulnerable.

In many provinces, it's mandatory for drivers over age 75 to have a medical every two years. This is not the case in Ontario. Here, drivers over the age of 80 must pass a mandatory vision and written test every two years, but it doesn't address reflexes and the cognitive ability to drive safely. As self analysis isn't always possible or practical, the family must step in, albeit gently. You must understand the magnitude of losing one's independence before you speak to him. If your father is close to his physician, perhaps you can get him or her involved as well.

Instead of expecting your father to give up his licence cold turkey, you could suggest a type of graduated licensing like they have for new drivers. Negotiate less driving and no nighttime or highway trips. For those times, offer to give him a ride or a taxi voucher. This may be the compromise you come to in the end, but don't expect to get there easily or quickly.

He's an intelligent man, so you should be able to appeal to his sense of reason and understanding. Give him time to get used to your suggestions. Above all, make sure he knows you are doing this because of how much you love and care for him.

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN., *email: eb@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional*

The BAYT Israel mission: incredible!

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

For the last seven years, community leaders Moishe Posner and Larry Zeifman have co-ordinated a Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto (BAYT) Brotherhood Solidarity Mission to Israel.

The mission's objectives are to show unity between the shul/community and the Israel Defence Forces; to allow mission participants the chance to see a dynamic Israel and interact with its citizens; and to connect with BAYT members living, learning and/or serving in Israel.

The recent BAYT mission (Dec. 7 to 16) included a whirlwind of activities and generosity, including a tour of Hebron and a dedication of a mobile shul to the IDF. Most importantly to the mission co-ordinators, however, were visits to cities, towns and settlements affected by terrorist attacks and rockets.

While in Israel, the team visited Kfar Azza, a secular settlement situated metres away from Gaza. Recently, a Kfar Azza citizen, Jimmy Kedoshim, 48, (rest in peace), was murdered, struck down by a Qassam rocket while mowing his lawn. The day before, Jimmy had flown over Sderot, throwing candies to the children below.

In Kfar Azza, the mission participants met a kindergarten class, received arts and crafts from the children and were shown a sealed room that was used as a bomb shelter and protection from gas attacks. (How do you explain gas attacks to five year olds?)

The participants offered the children gifts in return. Graciously, the yishuv representative responded, "*Baruch HaShem*, we're okay. The community down the road needs it more than we do."

The BAYT mission is open to community members and included participants from the Village Shul, B'nai Torah and Or Chaim Shul. Rabbi Baruch Taub, the spiritual leader of the BAYT, is the mission rav.

Every team member carries a duffel bag of donated new winter clothing and electronics. The warm clothing was especially welcomed this year because of Israel's harsh winter.

Some of the gifts were distributed to IDF soldiers at checkpoints the team travelled through, such as Shechem, en route to Jerusalem.

One night, the team had supper in Shilo with the Eldar family. Yitzchak Yonathan (rest in peace), a young family member, was murdered last year in the terrorist attack on Yeshivat Mercaz Harav. During the dinner, his parents spoke – for the first time publicly – about their son. "They told us Yitzchak was buried with his blood-stained Gemarah. We cried with them," Moishe said.

The BAYT participants spent time in the Jordan Valley at a rehabilitation centre for teenage girls at risk called Ginat Kedem, run by Rabbi Nir Efrati and his wife, Nava. The couple works with these "troubled kids" on healing psychological wounds and prepares them for independence through a program that includes academic and Torah studies and agricultural work. Toronto community members gave the Ginat Kedem residents MP3s, digital cameras, portable DVDs and clothing.

The famous BAYT mission Shabbat dinner in Jerusalem was attended by 150 Toronto youths who are in yeshiva, seminary, university or the army. The evening included singing, words of Torah and great food. "It was a beautiful Shabbos and went on past midnight," said Arthur Rosenzweig, past president of the BAYT Brotherhood. (Of course, there was a kiddush club during Shacharit services on Shabbat, a BAYT must.)

"This mission is hugely important as a show of support for the people of Israel," Larry said.

"When you've been on our trip, you learn to have a lot of respect for the people living on the front lines of terrorist attacks or rockets launched," he concluded.

"Israelis are living the dream by making a home in Eretz Yisrael. We're not there, so this mission is second best," Moishe added.

See BAYT Brotherhood Solidarity Mission to Israel on Facebook.

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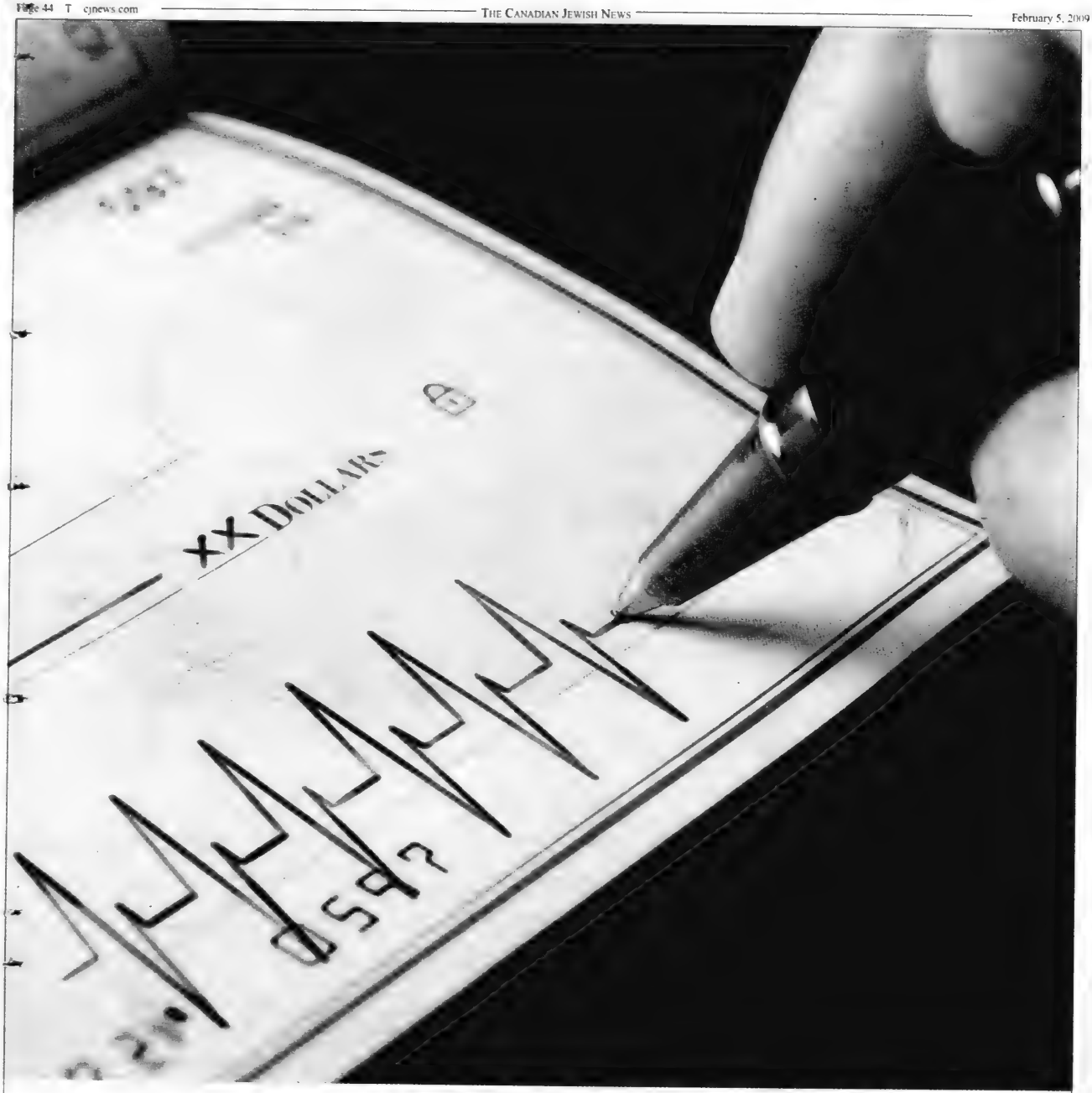

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To Your Health

Mothers know best

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A healthy body means healthy feet

Page B8

Dance your way to fitness

Page B5

Exercise to live

Page B5

Grandmother becomes personal trainer

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Edna Levitt says she's proof that it's never too late to start something new. The 69-year grandmother of two became a personal trainer at the age of 65.

Today, Levitt specializes in fitness training for people 50 and older (www.50plus-fitness.ca).

She does one-on-one resistance training for individuals and small groups in private homes. In collaboration with motivational speaker Susan Sommers, Levitt also does wellness seminars on fitness for people over 50. Her presentations focus on the benefits of strength training.

Levitt describes her foray into the fitness business as "totally serendipitous." She says she got the idea after a stranger commented on how fit she looked. "She said, 'I can tell you work out by the shape of your arms.'"

Relating the story to a friend, Levitt mused about becoming a certified personal trainer "My friend said, 'That's a good idea.'"

Levitt subsequently enrolled in a professional training program. It took her two tries to pass the written exam for certification, she confesses. "I was 65. I had never taken a science course before.

"I had to have a tutor in biomechanics of the human body, among other science topics. It was brutal."

Levitt had faced other difficult challenges before. She immigrated to Canada from Scotland in 1983 with her son, Michael, following the sudden death of her husband.

"I needed a fresh start," she says.

Before moving to Canada, she had never worked. Shortly after her arrival in Toronto, she enrolled at York University. "I felt I could never attempt to do anything professional unless I got educated."

Graduating at the age 50, she became a professional fundraiser. Her first job was at Baycrest.

That year, her son urged her to improve her level of fitness, she recalls. "He said, 'Mom, you're middle-aged now. It's time for you to join a gym.'"

When they went south for the winter break, Levitt, who had never exercised, took her son's advice. She went out walking every morning. When she returned from her vacation, she joined the YMCA. "I went at 6 in the morning, Monday to Friday. I can't tell you what got me committed, but within six months, I felt the difference."

Levitt held a number of fundraising and marketing jobs in the community before switching careers, and she says she has no plans to retire. "I started working so late in life, so at age 69, I don't feel burned out yet."

She says the work is very gratifying. Indeed, she recounts how she helped a grandmother who could barely walk dance at her grandson's wedding.

"I got a call last June. The woman said, 'My son's getting married in November and I'd like my 87-year-old mother to walk down the aisle.' The woman used a walker and she shuffled. She didn't lift her feet."

Levitt worked with her twice a week for an hour over five months. She says she taught her to do squats and lunges, first holding on to the table to build up confidence and strength.

By the fall, the woman was able to do the same moves with a three-pound medicine-ball. They even practised dancing, says Levitt. "My son was at the same wedding, and the woman said to him, 'Tell your mother I did the horah.'"

"It just shows you that you're never too old to do strength training. We're all a work in progress, but I'm not planning to reinvent myself again.

"I see what fitness has done for me and I see how I've helped others. I'm passionate about what I do."

Find your inner joy **Page B7**

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Centre provides care for the caregivers

By MARNI BRINDER BYK
Special to The CJN

Dr. Joel Sadavoy

Mount Sinai Hospital recently opened The Cyril & Dorothy, Joel & Jill Reitman Centre for Alzheimer's Support and Training – the first of its kind in Toronto.

The focus of the Reitman Centre, a media representative said, is the caregivers. "Being a caregiver for a family member with Alzheimer's is a demanding task and one that can lead to increased levels of stress and depression. Rates of depression among caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's are up to 40 per cent higher than in the general population. That is why the mental well-being of families confronted with Alzheimer's is just as important as the care provided to their loved ones."

Dr. Joel Sadavoy, director of the centre, head of geriatric psychiatry and head of community psychiatry services at Mount Sinai Hospital, stresses the need to address the training of caregivers because most of the care of those who are suffering from cognitive disease is provided at home, usually by spouses, and sometimes children.

He believes the most difficult element to face is the change of behaviour in a loved one, and most caregivers have no training and little education or information about what is causing the behaviour or what to do about it. The Reitman Centre is unique in its programming because it brings caregivers together and works through scenarios they can all learn from in a group setting.

The Reitman Centre began running its first sessions in January. Each group involves 24 caregivers who meet once a week for approximately three hours. Because it is nearly impossible for caregivers to leave their loved ones alone, a parallel group for care recipients is held at the same time. The entire process is 12 weeks total – two weeks for assessment; four weeks of group therapy, problem solving therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy; and six weeks of training.

The group therapy involves a partnership with the University of Toronto's simulated patient program, Sadavoy said.

"Simulated patients… listen to an evaluation of a family's challenges and recreate the scenario in a group setting, in order to provide the family with feedback.

"The scenarios are filmed and played back for the families, and together with the support team, they come up with a better approach to the situation."

The program is also partnered with the Alzheimer's Society of Toronto, has close ties with Baycrest and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health geriatric program, and is working with physicians for referrals for program participants.

Sadavoy believes it is important that the Reitman Centre and this program are in a general hospital because people come to the hospital who have problems with dementia and then they are at the front line of care.

Dementia, he said, mostly remains hidden in the community and people are not aware of the various forms of assistance available. It is his hope that the Reitman Centre will provide the help needed to empower caregivers at home and make the struggle they face more bearable.

After the 12-week program, staff will maintain contact with caregivers and provide supportive followup. Sadavoy has found that even telephone contact is effective, and group conference calls will help caregivers remember that they are a part of a larger support system.

There is no cost for the services, but financial support from the community is used for transportation to get some of the caregivers and care recipients to the centre.

For information about the Reitman Centre, contact Anne-Marie Vico at 416-586-4800, ext. 5192, or fax 416-586-3231.

To Your Health

Former cancer patient finds humour in her illness

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

Marla Lukofsky, a Toronto stand-up comedian, writer, TV and radio veteran and cancer survivor, uses her comedic talents to help those with cancer and their families face their journey through darkness and despair.

Her inspirational presentation is titled I'm Still Here and So is My Hair. Lukofsky is featured at many meetings and conferences, speaking candidly and with optimism about her own personal experiences.

Lukofsky was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1998. "I hope that my story will help others."

By adding some humour to her discussion of life-threatening challenges and referring to her own experience and her five-foot body, she transcends the negative side of life's stumbling blocks.

Speaking of her nose, she says, "I was born with my father's eyes, my mother's mouth and both my parents' noses."

The veteran entertainer of 30 years makes audiences laugh in Canada and the United States, and she speaks openly about the trials in her life: her battle with cancer, the unexpected death of her father, Lou, in 2004 followed by the diagnosis of leukemia for her mother Ruth, who died in 2006, eight months after her diagnosis.

She was also once knocked down by two dogs and broke two bones in her leg, which kept her house-bound for more than three months.

"There are funny things and sad things in my story – people laugh and people cry."

But Lukofsky looks for the positive in every situation.

While convalescing with her broken leg, she rewrote her memoir, wrote poems and prepared her speaking presentation.

Marla Lukofsky

"If I can touch even one person and have them feel that they're not alone, then I've succeeded."

She told The CJN that her sense of humour is an innate part of her personality. "It's not a coping mechanism. I want to share laughter and tears with whomever wants to experience them with me."

Lukofsky attended Bathurst Heights Collegiate and took the paralegal course at Seneca College while working as a stand-up comedian at night.

She was a member of Second City for a month, "until they realized that I wasn't Andrea Martin and they asked me to leave." (She's strongly resembles the former SCTV star.)

She represented Canada at international comedy festivals in Scotland and England. Her voice can also be heard as the Good Luck Bear on Care Bear cartoons.

Lukofsky started doing stand-up comedy in 1973 and decided after almost two decades that she wanted to be based in one city. In 1990, she moved to Los Angeles, where she continued working in stand-up comedy and as an actor.

It was in Los Angeles that she discovered the lump in her breast 10 years ago. After two mammograms that were negative, a mammography technician suggested that she have an ultrasound.

The procedure detected a small, but fast-growing tumour, and the cancer had spread to her lymph nodes. Lukofsky says she learned from this experience that if you don't feel comfortable with a diagnosis, insist on further tests.

After surgery, she had an aggressive course of chemotherapy and daily radiation.

"One night, while I lay in bed feeling extremely sick after hours of receiving chemo, a mosquito flew into my bedroom, bit me and sucked up my toxic blood. I watched it fall to the ground, lose its little black hairs and die."

With a smile she adds, "Now that's what I call sweet revenge."

A year after her surgery and treatments, Lukofsky returned to Toronto.

Recently, she has given her motivational speech at Willow Breast Cancer Support Canada, L'Chaim Cancer Support Group for Jewish Women, National Council of Jewish Women, Gilda's Club, the Saskatoon Cancer Conference and many other hospitals, fundraisers and organizations.

After each presentation, Lukofsky receives numerous letters and e-mails from cancer patients, their family members and organizers thanking her for both the educational component and the entertainment that takes her audience through a range of emotions.

She advises people to own up to their emotions. "If you feel bad and need to cry, then cry. When it's funny, laugh. And tell people what you need and what you don't need."

She stresses that it's important to listen to people with cancer. "Having a witness to your struggle is very healing."

She adds, "I'm a realist. People have a saying that a glass is half empty or half full. I see that there is a glass and there is water in it. And it's as simple as all that."

Lukofsky says she loves what she is doing. "With my speeches, I am combining my God-given talents – my stand-up, animated voices, my acting and my ability to tell stories.

"I look forward to more speaking engagements, because I want to get my message out," she says. "I also hope to publish my memoirs."

For more information, call 416-787-7680 or e-mail mmlukofsky7@aol.com.

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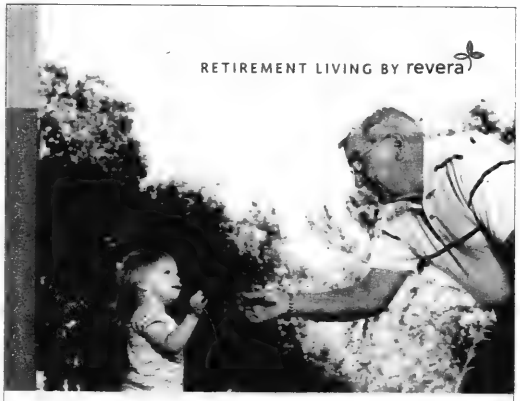

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Lifestyle Management Commission Concept by Nobrega

Ryerson program focuses on health communication

By ADAM MICHAEL SEGAL
Special to The CJN

It seems that almost everywhere we turn these days, there's a barrage of information about nutrition.

Whether it's from health-care professionals in the media or on bookshelves, the nutrition news never ceases, and we're left with the challenge of making sense of it all.

To help address these challenges and opportunities, Ryerson University has launched a new nutrition communication program.

First of its kind in Canada

The first of its kind in Canada, the one-year program will give students the opportunity to earn a master's of health science degree.

"The focus of the program is taking nutrition content and communicating it effectively," says program director Rena Mendelson. "The course will involve everything from interpersonal and group communication to social marketing and specific nutrition programs."

There are 16 students enrolled in the program, the majority of whom are currently working as registered dietitians or nutrition experts.

Susan Zogheib, a dietitian originally from the United States, says she's in the program to advance her skills and gain unique experience.

"Over the course of years at college and through experience, I realized that a dietitian must often go beyond textbooks and science and employ a touch of humanity to reach the outside world," says Zogheib, 26.

Alissa Steinberg and Susan Zogheib

"I [also] wanted something different and beyond my comfort zone and... Ryerson University intrigued me because it's in the exciting city of Toronto."

As part of the program, the students have a choice between participating in a practicum or working on a major research paper.

Zogheib and fellow student Alissa Steinberg are collaborating on a research paper that explores and evaluates messages about body weight and weight loss in Canadian women's magazines.

Steinberg says she's looking forward to both pursuing her own research and communicating nutrition facts to her future clients.

"Interpreting nutrition research and understanding its impact on various sectors, as well as becoming familiar with social [factors]... that may influence health behaviour are fundamental for nutrition communication," says Steinberg, 22.

"I intend on applying this new knowledge to advance my career."

The program aims to prepare graduates for potentially working in public and community health, as well as developing policy. Counselling and advanced professional practice is also a focus.

"Because many of the students will be working with populations, they will benefit from enhancing their oral and written communication skills and understanding the nuances of communicating risk, to hopefully result in health-behaviour change," says Mendelson.

"And they are fortunate to have the opportunity to engage closely with faculty and gain some very positive experiences."

To find out more, visit www.ryerson.ca/graduate/nutrition/.

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To Your Health

Two options for getting fit in 2009

By MARNI BRINDER BYK
Special to The CJN

On the top of most New Year's resolution lists for 2009 is getting fit, staying healthy and losing weight. However in these tough economic times, personal trainers and one-on-one fitness sessions may be too much of a luxury for those who have to curb their spending.

According to fitness experts, the hottest trend in fitness this year is group classes, and the GTA has much to offer for those looking to get fit and have fun.

Shown above and below are Marnie and Rena Schwartz

Identical twin sisters Marnie and Rena Schwartz are living their dream. Dancers for most of their lives, their ViBe Dance & Fitness Studio (www.vibestudio.ca) combines their love of teaching and dancing in one package.

Now celebrating its seventh year of business, ViBE offers a wide variety of classes for both boys and girls, starting at age three and for all levels of ability.

"The people who come to ViBE are people who love music and people who feel good about themselves," Marnie tells me after I took their Monday night GPT (group personal training) class for adults.

Their trademark motto "sweat and smile" is easily achieved by the class participants, who laugh at the personal stories the twins tell in between teaching.

They banter back and forth, finish each other's sentences, and before you know it, the class is almost over.

When you're at ViBE, you feel like you are a part of a family. Taking the class is their aunt, and sitting off to one side is their bubbie, who turns 90 this year and has been watching the girls dance for years.

Although she doesn't participate, she comes every Monday night, which adds to the feeling of inclusiveness in the class.

As Marnie and Rena instruct the class and entertain, they also demonstrate the correct way to execute the steps for the best results, often using each other to model what's right and wrong. They also make sure to encourage each person individually to make sure everyone is getting the most out of the class and is feeling the vibe.

ViBE prides itself on providing a recreational atmosphere for enjoying and participating in dance in a non-competitive atmosphere. The average student comes one to two hours a week, compared to the 15 hours you sometimes have to commit to when you are a competitive dancer.

They think it's important for their students to have time for other interests and be able to dance as little or as much as they want. Health is the focus, not medals.

They believe that it's important to encourage children to enjoy a healthy lifestyle while they're still young in order to establish physical activity as a part of their lifestyle, which will benefit them into adulthood.

At Not the Norm Fitness (notthenormfitness@gmail.com) Leah Posluns Tellez transformed an old 2,000-square-foot showroom in the Castlefield Caledonia Design and Décor District into a beautifully decorated Pilates studio, and she did it in only two weeks.

"We did a paint job, equipped the studio and resurfaced the floors – oh, and decorated, of course!"

The décor is worth mentioning at Not the Norm Fitness, because it includes dozens of her Grampa Irving Posluns' photographs from around the globe, including some magnificent portraits from India.

The photos help to create a Zen-like atmosphere in this open concept studio that is filled with all the equipment needed to take a first-rate Pilates class.

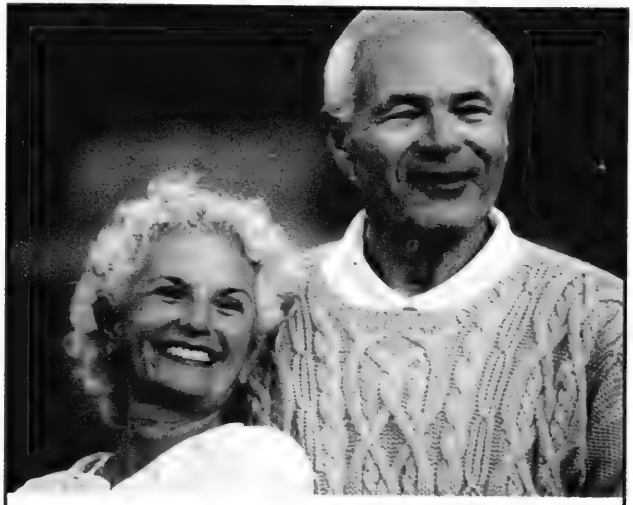
Posluns Tellez's family has influenced every aspect of this studio. Not the Norm Fitness is a tribute to her health-guru zaide, Norman Solmon, because he always "pushed you to do things 100 per cent."

Posluns Tellez's mother, Gail Posluns, introduced her to Pilates, and she comes to her daughter's "long and lean" Pilates class every week.

This class, which I attended with Pilates enthusiast Janet Hay, is a mat class in which small props are used for the various exercises. Stability balls, foam rollers and toning balls are used throughout the one-hour class, and Posluns Tellez fuses her Pilates knowledge with cardiovascular exercise.

The average class size at Not the Norm Fitness is six people, which Posluns Tellez believes is just the right size. Any larger and she believes her clients don't get enough attention and that may lead to injuries. Posluns Tellez, who was certified at Toronto's well-known STOTT Pilates, uses her understanding of anatomy and medical/muscular education to ensure her students are not doing any harm to their muscles and joints under her watchful eye.

Posluns Tellez said that she believes in "teaching the value of 'exercising to live' and not the other way around, so that my clients may succeed outside of the studio. The transferability of my lessons to everyday life is what makes my classes different."



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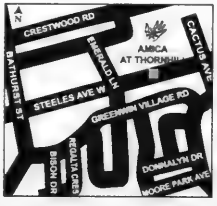

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To Your Health

Acupuncturist helps patients heal themselves

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Dr. Michael A. Cohen, a Toronto-based chiropractor and acupuncturist, is known for his innovative approach to treatment.

He combines Eastern healing traditions that focus on the mind-body connection and self healing with chiropractic medicine.

Lately, several hospitals, rehabilitation clinics, sports teams, dancers and even celebrities have become supporters of his self-healing work. They recommend using the Acuball, a self-healing device that he invented.

Cohen (416-784-4000) treats a variety of conditions that include back, neck and shoulder pain; knee, leg and hip problems; repetitive strain injuries and headaches at the Allen Road Mind-Body Clinic (619 Lawrence Ave. W.). He says his chiropractic patients' conditions respond well to the integration of chiropractic medicine with native healing traditions.

Over the past 15 years, he has studied these techniques in such places as Indonesia, China, India, the Philippines, Tibet and the Amazon. In fact, his acupuncture diploma is from the Kalubowila Hospital in Sri Lanka.

"In Beijing, self-healing is part of the hospital system," he explains. "When I came back from China, I said to myself, 'I have to do this in my own practice.' It never made sense to me to give someone else the complete task of healing the body.

"What was so interesting in China was that when the patient does their own healing, they generate healing energy."

Cohen says he aims to integrate self healing with the chiropractic adjustments and acupuncture treatment he offers in his office. "The best thing for patients is to go to a practitioner and also do their own healing work.

"I take the time to educate patients about why they feel the way they do. We empower them to heal themselves as much as possible."

One of the tools Cohen uses to foster self-healing is the Acuball, he says. "It took me seven years to develop."

The small knobby rubber ball uses heat and pressure to ease tension in the back, shoulders, neck and even the feet, he explains. "It's the world's first heatable ball. You put it in the microwave for 50 seconds, and it generates one hour of heat."

He advises placing the Acuball on the shoulder or back or any area of pain and tension. "My mother sleeps with it every night to release her hip. It's great, because there's no medication involved."

Cohen notes that the Acuball, which has been on the market for two years, is being used in rehabilitation clinics, hospitals and yoga and Pilates studios.

"The reason hospitals like it is that they give it to the patient so that when they're at home they can release some of the tightness in the muscles and joints. The muscles and joints contract after the surgery as the body responds to the trauma," he says.

"Today it's about patient empowerment. Pain can motivate people to get active in their own healing."

In his own practice, he finds that people who practise self- healing need less clinical treatment. "It reduces patient visits by about 50 per cent."

Ted Grosberg, 65, who has been Cohen's patient for about a year, says he has always been open to Eastern medicine practices such as acupuncture. He initially sought chiropractic treatment for a neck injury. After Cohen did some adjustments to alleviate the discomfort in Grosberg's neck, he addressed other long-standing areas of pain.

Grosberg says he finds Cohen's technique of focusing on one specific problem area at a time very effective. "He spends a lot of time identifying the area of pain and works on those muscles. He'll only do two or three adjustments at a time."

Grosberg says that between clinic visits, he uses the Acuball. "I get great results in a few minutes. It's like a massage or strong accupressure. It's an excellent release."

He is among many fans of the Acuball. The device is also used by Richard Branson of Virgin Records fame, Canadian singer Sarah McLachlan, players in the National Hockey League and National Basketball Association, and dancers in the National Ballet of Canada, including the company's artistic director, former prima ballerina Karen Kain.

For Cohen, the growing popularity of the Acuball supports his belief in the importance of self-healing for both acute and chronic pain.

"How many thousands of people are out there that don't realize that they have the power to help themselves?"

For information on the Acuball go to wwwacuball.com.

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To Your Health

Conscious creation brings joy and fulfilment

By DORA NUDELMAN
Special to The CJN

What is conscious creation? Well, the easiest way to explain it is by talking about what it's not – it's not what I like to call robotic creation.

In robotic creation, you go about your day allowing people and circumstances to push your buttons. You get angry at the incompetence of the mail delivery person or the checkout clerk at the grocery store, the guy who seemingly cut you off on the road, your friend or business associate for not returning your call, your spouse for not appreciating the hard work you put into the family. You get upset when someone tells you you're too short, too fat, too blonde, too intelligent – too this and too that.

Basically then, robotic creation is allowing people and circumstances outside of you to control how you feel on the inside. Subsequently, you create for yourself a life of pain, heartache, tension, stress, anger, frustration, depression, and the list unfortunately goes on and on.

So robotic creation doesn't sound very productive, does it? Think about it: if you can co-create your life through your consciousness, feelings and actions, then why would you choose to create a robotic, miserable life? It's like choosing an expired carton of eggs when there's a fresh one sitting right next to it.

So what's the alternative?

It's conscious creation: it happens when you understand the role you play in your own life. You are willing to take responsibility for whatever comes into your life because you know that you created it somehow within your own consciousness. Because of this, you always choose to be happy, to forgive rather than resent, to appreciate rather than begrudge.

Dora Nudelman

Conscious creation involves an awareness of consciousness. You intentionally make choices that come from the highest part of you rather than from your ego. You know that you, and only you, decide what you think at any given moment. You know that being reactive only gives your power away to others.

A client came to me with stress-related issues. She was feeling irritable and dissatisfied, mainly with her health and her inability to communicate effectively with others. Her primary issue was that she had an incessant need to control everyone and everything in her life. She wanted everything to be according to her own agenda. If it wasn't, she would get irritated, snappy and physically sick. This need to control others essentially became something that controlled her. Robotically, she had been reacting to situations and people. She was blaming others for making her feel unhealthy and stressed.

In the 10-step protocol I use in my practice, one of the steps includes taking responsibility. This step is crucial in the conscious creation process because it is only when we take responsibility that we can start to create the reality that we want.

So in coaching my client through this step, I helped her realize that she controlled her own thoughts, that other people weren't making her feel anything. She was making herself sick, unhappy, irritated and angry because she was choosing to respond in this way.

She thought the only way to be happy was if others changed in accordance with her expectations. What she came to realize was that it was up to her to change from within and that this was the only way to see changes from without. In practising her tools and exercises, she noticed that as she became calmer and more content, her environment started to change as well. By releasing the need to control others, she gained more control over herself and her surroundings.

So now it's time for you to decide. Will you choose robotic creation, filled with pain and hardship? Or will you choose conscious creation, filled with infinite joy and fulfilment? It's your choice.

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To Your Health

A healthy body requires healthy feet

By ADAM MICHAEL SEGAL
Special to The CJN

Have you ever given thought to the amount of time you spend standing on your feet each day?

Between work, home and leisure, the steps you log on your heels and toes really add up.

To help you stay mobile and prevent all of this wear and tear from leading to any one of 300 foot conditions or other health issues, proper foot care is very important.

"With good foot health, people tend to be more comfortable on their feet," says Dr. Alan Silverstein, a Toronto-based podiatrist.

"And one of the keys to good foot health is inspecting your feet on a regular basis."

Silverstein notes that during an inspection, you should check for such things as sores, cracks, redness and the temperature.

Dry skin, tingling, numbness and discoloration are also symptoms to watch out for.

Proper foot care also involves keeping your feet clean, exercising on a regular basis, including doing toe stretches and wearing good quality shoes.

It's best to bathe your feet with a mild soap daily in lukewarm water.

Monitoring and cutting your nails diligently is also an important part of proper foot hygiene.

Be sure to cut your toenails straight across to avoid ingrown toenails, and don't snip them too short.

When it comes to shoes, experts emphasize wearing the right size and ensuring you can walk smoothly, without pain.

It's ideal to not wear the exact same pair of shoes every day and being in shoes that are appropriate for the type of activity you are participating in.

Other critical components are comfort, stability, cushioning and making sure the mechanics of the shoe mesh well with your feet.

An increasingly popular method people are choosing to help relieve pressure areas on their feet are orthotics.

Orthotics, which are devices placed in shoes to support or correct musculoskeletal deformities, have the potential to decrease pain in your feet and potentially in other parts of the body, including your lower back, knee and hips.

Alan Silverstein

They have also been shown to prevent a deformed foot from developing additional problems.

"Orthotics are very helpful for controlling the function of the foot," says Silverstein, who has been a podiatrist for more than 35 years.

"You can buy them over the counter, as well as custom made. It's unlikely orthotics will cure the problem entirely, but they certainly can alleviate them."

Silverstein notes that an insole can also be an option to deal with such common foot ailments as corns and calluses.

At the end of the day, your feet support your whole body, so taking good care of them really is taking good care of you.

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To Your Health

A healthy attitude may help prevent eating disorders

By MICHELE FOSTER
Special to The CJN

We live in a society where people are often plagued by a fear of fat. Recent data from Israel demonstrates that 74 per cent of girls in Grade 10 are on diets, although only 12 per cent are actually overweight.

Many argue that people's obsession with appearance has led directly to an increase in disordered eating, particularly among girls and women.

While there is no sure-fire way to prevent eating disorders, there are some steps that parents can take to protect their children from having a poor body-image and a fear of fat, both of which have been associated with disordered eating.

It is never too early to help your children develop a positive relationship with food. In fact, studies show that many girls go on their first diet before the age of 14.

Planning regular family meals together encourages children to become involved in a regular eating routine. Parents should try to include all food groups in every meal, and not avoid serving carbohydrates like pasta, or cooking with healthy fats such as some vegetable oils or olive oil.

Removing foods from the dinner plate teaches children that some foods are "bad," and we all know the appeal of forbidden foods... just ask Eve! In fact, studies show that these "forbidden foods," especially carbohydrates and sweets, are the ones that bulimics tend to binge on. Instead of labelling foods negatively, teach children that all foods are good, but that some are better for them in moderation.

Jewish customs often revolve around sharing large meals together, and while grandmothers lovingly nudging us to clear our plates is often a Shabbat dinner tradition, this can actually prevent children from paying attention to their natural hunger cues. Instead, children can be taught to listen to their bodies and to eat when hungry and stop when full.

Children can be taught to listen to their bodies and to eat when hungry and stop when full

In addition, parents should pay close attention to how they talk about their own bodies, particularly in the presence of their children. Hearing a mother talk about her latest diet, feeling fat or not liking her thighs tells children and teens that hating our body is okay.

Furthermore, parents should ensure that they do not communicate negatively about their children's bodies, either verbally or with their behaviour, as kids easily pick up on these messages. Instead, children can be praised for their personalities and for the unique characteristics that make them who they are. Offering kids and teens compliments only about their physical appearance or strength teaches them that the outside is what matters most.

Finally, parents who hear their children comment negatively about their own appearance or the appearance of others should not be afraid to challenge their kids. For example, if you hear your children say that being fat is synonymous with being gross or lazy, ask them why they think this, and help them discover whether these stereotypes are true for people in their own lives.

It's never too early or too late to make these changes in your family's lifestyle. For more information on preventing eating disorders, or to help someone who is suffering from one, visit the National Eating Disorder Information Centre at www.nedic.ca.

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To Your Health

Ayelet Bercovich and her daughter

Rest assured that mom knows best

By AYELET BERCOVICH
Special to The CJN

It's 8:50 p.m., and my daughter is mumbling her ABCs, fumbling through the "N-N-N-O-P" part. She's lying down in her bed after her bath and she's finished her milk. She is looking up at the butterflies hanging from the wall, singing to her hands, and looking at me from time to time smiling from ear to ear.

She is not sleeping yet, and to be honest, I love every minute of it.

But shhh… don't let the mommy groups know.

Before I gave birth, I was adamant that I would sign up for every possible mommy group activity, thinking no one could understand me better than another mother. I did. I joined a ton of activities and met many new moms with whom I shared coffee after class.

This was enjoyable enough until the gatherings stopped being friendly and turned into a contest of who was raising their kids the best.

My confidence as a new mom was shattered one day when one mother brought her "life-saving" book about babies and their sleeping habits to one of our coffee dates.

I suddenly felt like our relaxing meetings were turning into child psychology classes with a different PhD lecturer/mom every week.

I couldn't help but second guess most of my decisions as a new mom – especially about my baby's sleeping and eating habits. Apparently, I was supposed to toughen up and let my daughter cry for three hours because, as the moms said, "it's the only way she'll learn to fall asleep."

Another time, I overheard a conversation between two mothers, and one proudly claimed that her daughter "has never tasted salt, sugar or meat!" I kept picturing my daughter's nighttime ritual of sitting on her red Elmo chair, enjoying her blue popsicle while watching The Wiggles. Was I doing something wrong?

When I explained my overwhelming emotions about mommy groups to my doctor, he gave me a quick reality check: "You know, Ayelet, after so many years of treating children, one day I'll also write a parenting book. It will have thousands of pages in it, all empty!" he told me.

If you're a new mom, you are no stranger to the immense pressure that comes with the experience. There's the gossip, the cliques and the critiques – all while you're doing the hokey pokey and smiling to your baby.

Raving about your little ones is inevitable – that's how mommy groups naturally form. However, it doesn't need to feel like a gruelling competition. You must trust your own instincts. You are doing the best for your kids and no one can pass judgment on that.

I eventually did find that small percentage of sensible, supportive mothers who do not judge me when I tell them that I spent a good portion of last night in my daughter's bed. Those are the women who have become my friends, the ones I never hesitate to turn to for support.

To Your Health

Centre helps seniors keep moving

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

Physiotherapists Jan Goldstein Elman (left) and Rebecca Gruber at their One Step Ahead Mobility clinic.

Physiotherapists Rebecca Gruber (left) and Jan Goldstein Elman work with patients at the gym at the One Step Ahead Mobility clinic.

Physical activity is essential for good health no matter what your age or medical condition. Yet, many individuals with chronic conditions, seniors with limitations and people completing a rehabilitation program are afraid to exercise.

"Often they don't know where to begin and how to exercise safely," says Jan Goldstein Elman, who last year founded One Step Ahead Mobility with her partner Rebecca Gruber.

Goldstein Elman and Gruber have been practising physiotherapists for more than 20 years, focusing on the elderly and those with chronic illnesses – Parkinson's disease, arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, multiple sclerosis and other conditions.

"We use a variety of specialized programs, treatment techniques and technologies to help clients reach their full physical potential," Gruber says.

One Step Ahead Mobility, located at Bathurst and Glencairn, is the first community-based physiotherapy clinic that concentrates solely on physical mobility for adults with chronic illnesses. Its motto is "Learn to exercise to your ability."

In addition to holding bachelor degrees in physiotherapy, both also have master's degrees from the University of Toronto, Gruber in rehabilitation sciences and Goldstein Elman in health promotion.

Now on the faculty of the physical therapy department at U of T, both worked at Baycrest Centre for more than 15 years, treating residents and outpatients.

"This gave us our appreciation and the experience to help older people with complex chronic conditions," Gruber says.

She explains that it takes special training to cater to people with a number of problems.

"As an example, if you have a chronic condition and have an injury, rehabilitation is far more complex."

They both worked at the Centre for Movement Disorders, a specialized neurological clinic for people with Parkinson's disease located in Markham.

"We recognized that there was a need for this specialized therapy in the core of the city, and [last] February, we opened One Step Ahead Mobility," Goldstein Elman says.

With word of mouth, doctor recommendations and referrals from agencies, "we are delighted that we are able to help so many people with diverse medical needs," she says.

Along with individual programs and group exercise classes in the gym at the clinic, they also provide in-home assessments and consultations throughout the GTA.

"People in North America are living longer, in part because we are surviving illnesses that once shortened life," Goldstein Elman says, "and more people are living with chronic disease."

Scientific studies show that by age 60, people have on average 2.5 chronic illnesses, and the number continues to increase with age.

"Our clinic helps to address the ongoing specific needs of people who want to live well despite their challenges," Gruber notes.

She stresses that these people need guidance to adapt the exercise to their individual personal needs and to help prevent injury during therapy and exercise sessions.

"Improving mobility and maintaining a level of activities helps prevent complications of existing conditions.

"Along with specialized treatments, we have special equipment geared to their limitations and mobility restrictions such as supportive equipment for people who have balance problems."

For more information on One Step Ahead Mobility, call 416-783-7175 or visit their website at www.onestepaheadmobility.com.

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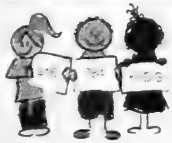
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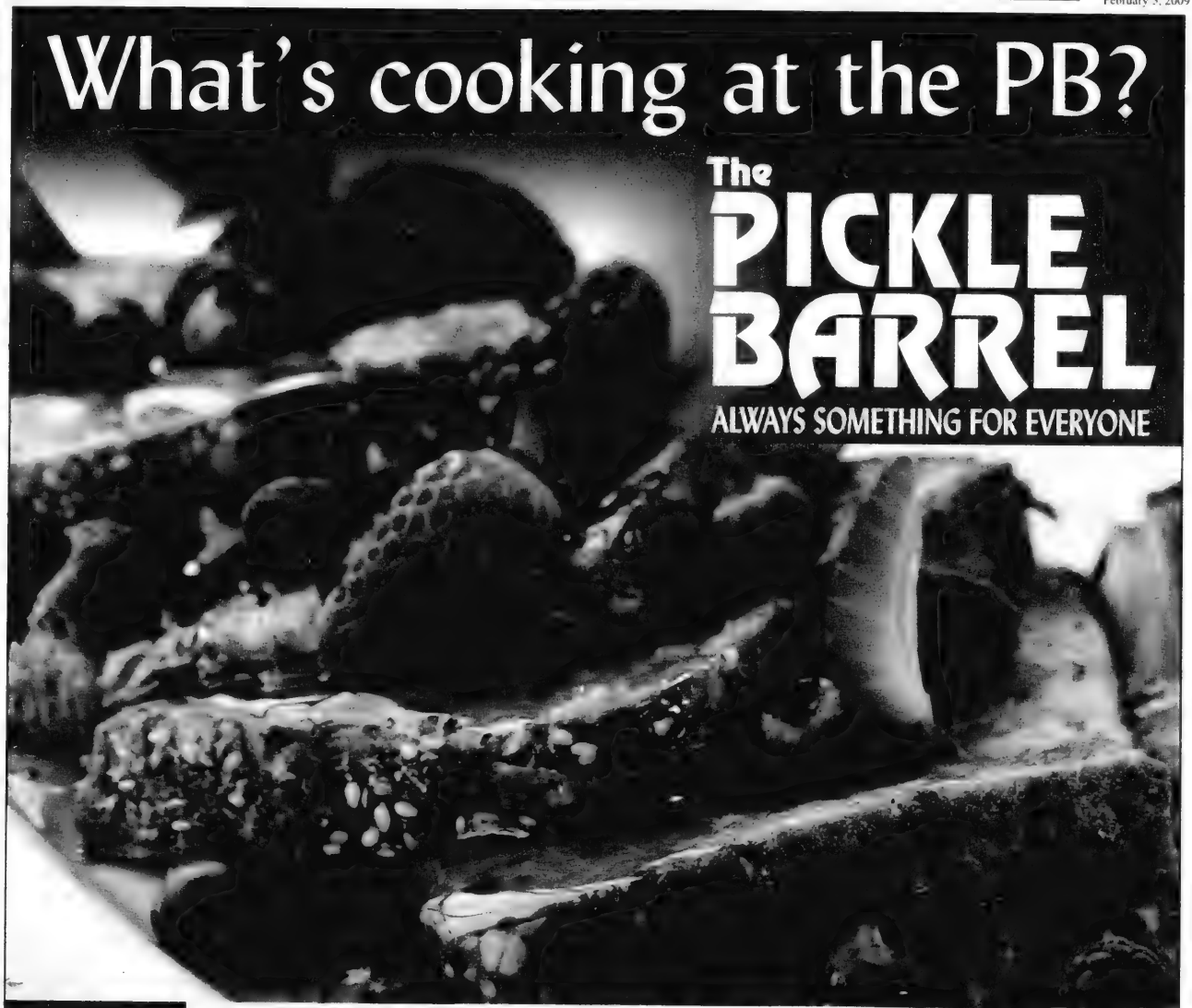
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This Week

National

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Israel & The Jewish World

Aish HaTorah founder dies. *Page 29*

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Nikki Yanofsky, 15, nominated for two Junos. *Page 30*

Yuri Bashmet brings his unique viola style to Toronto. *Page 31*

On cjnews.com

Israel's prisons are run humanely, expert says.

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DIGGING FOR VOTES

Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu, centre, planted a tree for the holiday of Tu b'Shvat during a visit Sunday to the Golan Heights. As Israelis were preparing to vote in national elections on Tuesday, after The CJN went to press, polls indicated that Netanyahu was the frontrunner. For up-to-date coverage, please visit cjnews.com. The CJN will have full coverage of election results in next week's issue.

[Israel Sun photo]

Gaza fallout hits Canadian universities

McGill defers motion

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The McGill University student union was obliged to shelve a proposed anti-Israel resolution after a motion brought by opponents was carried at a general assembly last week.

By a vote of 436-263, undergraduates agreed that the resolution should be "postponed indefinitely" because the Student Society of McGill University (SSMU) is not the appropriate forum for debate over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

SSMU president Kay Turner told The CJN that the decision means the resolution is "effectively killed," but does not prevent a similar resolution being put forward for consideration at a future SSMU general assembly.

Activists with the Hillel Jewish student association, which had mobilized many of the opponents, were behind the motion to shelve.

"This is a very symbolic victory," said Dan Hadad, Hillel director of advocacy, "It sends a message that the SSMU is not the forum for discussing Middle East issues. The right place is on campus, between students and clubs…

"It also sends a message that we will not stand for injustice. It's a victory not only for Jewish students and Israel, but for all of McGill."

The SSMU represents the nearly 20,000 undergraduates attending McGill.

Continued on page 25

Altercations at UBC

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The RCMP is investigating two separate incidents at the University of British Columbia involving a pro-Palestinian student who allegedly assaulted two Jewish students after Hamas and PLO posters were torn from his dorm room door.

An RCMP news release stated that on Jan. 31 at 8:30 p.m., a group of four Jewish students were roaming the halls of UBC Place Vanier Residence filming a documentary for their Jewish fraternity when they came across a dorm room with Hamas and PLO posters on the door.

As one of the students tore down the posters, the student to whom the posters belonged heard a commotion outside his door and confronted the group. The four students ran away, but one was caught by the pro-Palestinian student and an altercation ensued, police said.

The pro-Palestinian student reportedly restrained the Jewish student until UBC resident advisers arrived, and he alleged that the Jewish student hurled racial slurs at him during the fight.

About 45 minutes later, six other Jewish students came to the Vanier residence. The pro-Palestinian student saw the group outside his door, chased them away and got into a physical altercation with another Jewish student.

Continued on page 25

Yitro
Candlelighting: 5:27
Havdalah: 6:33

Greater Toronto Area

Deal to release Schalit in the works – please see page 27

The News in Brief

Canada

Shul Attack Decried

OTTAWA — Ottawa last week condemned the recent attack on the main synagogue in Caracas, Venezuela. Up to 15 people attacked the shul overnight on Jan. 30-31, damaging Torah scrolls and spraying graffiti such as "death to the Jews" on the walls. A shul guard was also bound and gagged at gunpoint. "We urge the government of Venezuela to follow through on their commitment to investigate this crime and bring the perpetrators to justice," Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Peter Kent said.

NDP Chides Church

OTTAWA — The NDP's Charlie Angus has urged his fellow MPs to "speak out" against the Pope's decision to welcome back into the Catholic fold Bishop Richard Williamson, "a notorious supporter of the lies of [Holocaust denier Ernst] Zundel." Angus, his party's heritage and culture critic, said last week in the House of Commons that the bishop "has consorted with the Zundel defenders" and claimed "that no Jews died in the gas chambers. By rehabilitating [him], the church has shown a surprising indifference to the international fight against Holocaust denial." In 1989, the bishop "was investigated by Canadian police after he publicly defended Zundel from the pulpit of a Canadian church," Angus said on his website.

World

Caracas Jews Protest

CARACAS — The Jewish community of Caracas protested a Jan. 30 attack on a shul. Dozens of protesters, many holding flags of Israel and Venezuela, gathered Feb. 5 outside Caracas' main synagogue, the El Universal newspaper reported. "We do not talk politics in these premises," the head of the Venezuelan Israeli Association, Elías Farache, said. "Here we meet, we pray, we gather… For this reason, we feel outraged and devastated." More than a dozen armed men stormed the shul, desecrating religious items, scrawling threatening messages on walls, and stealing information on the Jewish community. The government condemned the attack and blamed it on the political opposition, but many Jews accuse President Hugo Chavez of fomenting anti-Jewish feelings by criticizing Israel. Some of his backers shouted pro-Palestine slogans at the ralliers.

Looted Art Deal

NEW YORK — Two Picasso paintings claimed by a German Jewish scholar will remain in New York. Under undisclosed terms of the settlement, the Museum of Modern Art and the Solomon Guggenheim Foundation will retain the works that were sought by the family of Paul von Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, who allegedly was forced by the Nazis to part with them. The museums had denied the paintings were acquired under duress.

Judge Has Surgery

NEW YORK — Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg, 75, the first Jewish woman on the U.S. Supreme Court, had surgery for pancreatic cancer Feb. 5 in New York. She was to stay in hospital for seven to 10 days. A lesion was discovered in a routine checkup and further tests revealed a one-centimetre-wide, early-stage tumour, the court said.

School Board Rebukes CUPE's Ryan

TORONTO — The Toronto District School Board sent a letter last week to Sid Ryan, president of CUPE Ontario, expressing strong disapproval of his recent proposal to have his union urge Canadian universities to sanction Israeli academics and post-secondary institutions in the wake of the Gaza conflict.

Trustees Josh Matlow, who tabled the motion calling for the letter at the TDSB's Feb. 4 meeting, and James Pasternak, who seconded it, thanked TDSB chair John Campbell and the board for "their principled stand against intolerance." CUPE local 4400 represents the TDSB's education support workers.

"The nature and tone of your remarks are contrary to the spirit with which our staff, your members, support their students," Campbell wrote to Ryan. "While your comments were directed at universities and not school boards, they can leave the impression that you think that children (and adults) from some cultures should be less welcome in our schools than others. This is contrary to both TDSB policy and to the daily commitment demonstrated by our staff who are members of CUPE 4400."

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Bloc MP's e-mail disturbs Jewish groups

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Jewish organizations are appalled that a Member of Parliament sent an e-mail to all 307 other MPs containing links to images glorifying radical Islamic groups that are listed as terrorist groups by the Canadian government, as well as graphic photos of Palestinian casualties during the recent Israeli military operation in Gaza.

The unsolicited material, headlined Gaza Daily Bulletin, was sent by Maria Mourani, the Bloc Québécois member for the Montreal riding of Ahuntsic on Feb. 3, with the cover letter, "My goal was to show the impact not only on the people but also on the imagination of a large part of the population. This violence feeds tension and extremism and cannot lead to a lasting solution.

"As some people have noted, beyond photos of this terrible reality, a violent and hateful propaganda is emerging that unfortunately is spreading throughout the Middle East and around the world."

After the matter was raised in the House of Commons by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and after Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe publicly rebuked her, Mourani later apologized in the House.

"My intention was to show the horrors of the war, since innocent civilians can be victims, as well as the destruction it causes. However, before forwarding the bulletin to all members, I did not consult all the links included in the e-mail, as I should have.

Contains links to images glorifying terrorist groups

"Some of those links lead the reader to sites with videos containing hate propaganda, which I do not support in any way. In fact, I condemn it."

The Quebec-Israel Committee (QIC) and B'nai Brith Canada had asked Mourani to apologize. The groups say that the Canadian Arab Federation was the source of the material and that it must cease to disseminate material that is hateful propaganda and promotes terrorism.

The e-mail included links to 14 videos and clips on the website www.youtube.com, each lasting several minutes. The Jewish groups say these originated with groups supporting Hamas, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade and Islamic Jihad.

A brief survey uncovered images of uniformed and masked men brandishing guns and girding themselves with bombs, the flags and symbols of Hamas and other groups, and a map of Israel indicating that it is under Islamic dominance. The writing is mainly in Arabic.

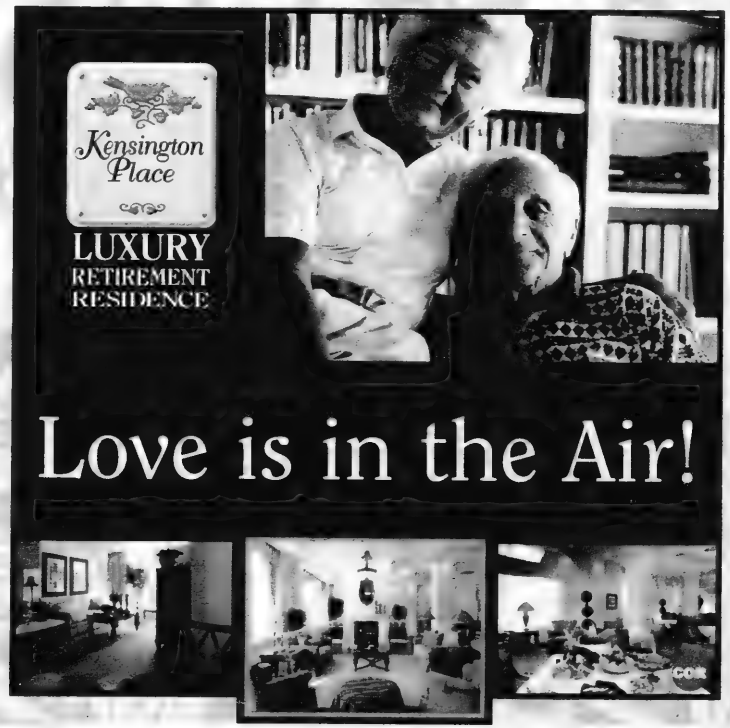
What is clear are the 32 photos showing bloodied casualties, including children, and devastation of property. There are links to dozens of other photos said to depict life in a United Nations compound during the 21-day conflict, and to articles in major newspapers and on websites such as Palestinian Think Tank, whose logo is a brain atop an army tank, critical of Israel or questioning its legitimacy.

The e-mail concludes with a plea for contributions to the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions to assist in humanitarian relief in Gaza.

QIC executive director Luciano Del Negro said Mourani's defence that she did not screen everything in the e-mail before sending it out does not absolve her of responsibility. "She is either extremely naïve or a knave, and I think it's probably the latter," he said.

He noted that it's not the first time Mourani has aired controversial views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In August 2006 she accused Israel of committing war crimes in its conflict with Hezbollah, after she returned from a visit sponsored by the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations.

She quickly softened her remarks when they made headlines, saying she sided with then-UN human rights high commissioner Louise Arbour's assessment that war crimes may have been committed by both sides.



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For the record

From the editor's desk...

A number of readers contacted The CJN last week indignant at the Sunday Star of Feb. 1 for its coverage of the unintended deaths of three daughters and a niece of Dr. Ezzeldeen Abu al-Aish at the hands of the Israel Defence Forces during the fighting in the recent Gaza War.

It was not the fact of the coverage that annoyed the readers. They each expressed sadness and sympathy for the girls' unnecessary deaths and for the family that had been so irremediably devastated.

Rather, what enraged them was the timing of the story, appearing nearly two weeks after the ceasefire, and especially its expansive, sweeping nature.

The Star dedicated three pages – virtually the entire front page and two full facing pages – to the story written by Oakland Ross.

Ross was masterful in introducing Abu al-Aish to the readers, relating the impact of the tragedy and describing the response to it by angry Palestinians and disconsolate Israelis.

But the account of the circumstances of the deaths on Jan. 16 depicted by Ross was, unfortunately, one-sided and short on the full details of the horrible mishap. Ross wrote two sentences toward the end of the piece that purported to give the Israeli account of the event.

The purpose of the story, Ross and his editors would say, was to describe for Canadian readers the horrific, unimaginable distress of Abu al-Aish and his family who are considering an opportunity to relocate in Toronto. It was not to retread the sodden ground of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

But without a full accounting of the circumstances of the tragic deaths of Abu al-Aish's three daughters and his niece, the three-page story is a heavy-handed, unfair, emotion-packed indictment of Israel and, in some corners, of course, effectively incitement against the Jewish state.

The fuller accounting of the details of the event were reported by the investigation into the tragic incident by the IDF, which was made public last week.

The investigation was conducted by the commanders of the forces in the area, as well as the division commander, and was approved by officer in charge of the Southern Command and the head of the IDF Operations Branch.

I reproduce the salient parts of the investigation results.

"The conclusions found that two shells were fired from an IDF tank resulting in the deaths of Abu al-Aish's three daughters.

"A force from the Golani Infantry Brigade operated in the area of Sajaiya for several days, during which they were engaged in face-to-face combat… also located tunnels used for ambushing and attacking IDF forces and identified homes which were booby-trapped.

"On that Friday [Jan. 16], the force came under sniper and mortar fire in an area laden with explosives and IEDs (improvised explosive devices). The force identified and located the source of fire from a house adjacent to that of the doctor's and, in response, opened fire.

"During the counter-fire opened by the IDF forces, suspicious figures were identified in the upper level of Abu al-Aish's house and were thought to be spotters who directed the Hamas sniper and mortar fire. Upon assessing the situation in the field while under heavy fire, the commander of the force gave the order to open fire on the suspicious figures. It is from this fire that the three daughters of Abu al-Aish were killed.

"Following the opening of fire, screams were heard from the direction of the house, and immediately the IDF force ceased all fire. Only later was it understood that this was in fact the house of Abu al-Aish. When contact was made with the doctor, the IDF force operated in order to allow for ambulances to evacuate the injured via the Erez Crossing for immediate emergency medical treatment in Israel.

"The IDF Spokesperson Unit stresses that in the days leading up to the incident, Abu al-Aish was contacted personally several times by officers in the Coordination and Liaison Administration in order to urge the doctor to evacuate his home, as many others already had because of Hamas operations and the intense fighting that was already taking place in that area for several days.

"The IDF Spokesperson Unit also emphasizes that in addition to the personal contact made directly with Abu al-Aish, the IDF issued warnings to the residents of Sajaiya by dropping thousands of leaflets as well as issuing warnings via Palestinian media outlets.

"The IDF is saddened by the harm caused to the Abu al-Aish family, but at the same time states that considering the constraints of the battle scene, the amount of threats that endangered the force and the intensity of fighting in the area, the forces' action and the decision to fire towards the building were reasonable."

Honesty, justice, fairness and the sorrowful, wrenching tug of compassion demand the truer, fuller accounting of the facts of the Jan. 16 tragedy. Such an accounting does not diminish the depth of the loss suffered by Abu al-Aish's family, as even the IDF acknowledged, but it explains how the loss occurred. The Sunday Star may not have felt it worthy to do so, but we certainly do.

–MBD

See JN

CHALLAH HOUSE: Eighteen Jewish women in their 20s recently took part in a monthly program titled "Challah for Chesed" at the House, a midtown Jewish centre that provides educational experiences for young adults. The program taught participants the art of baking and braiding challah, as well as about sharing with people in need, why Jews use challah and deeper meanings of Shabbat.

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BBYO genocide program puts focus on Darfur

By RITA POLIAKOV
Special to The CJN

Sixteen-year-old Maya Feldberg was not at a party on Saturday, Jan. 31. She wasn't at a movie, a friend's house or a restaurant, either. Instead, she spent the night learning about genocide.

That Saturday, the B'nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO) held a 12-hour Genocide Aware-a-thon.

The participants, a group of 30 to 40 teenagers, learned about the genocide in Darfur, Sudan, where at least 400,000 people have been killed since February 2003. Through guest speakers, discussions and activities, the teenagers learned the history and significance of the conflict.

"It's good – we're getting a lot of knowledge in a short period of time," said Feldberg, who joined BBYO two months ago. "You can look at it from different points of view and discuss different points of view."

Along with raising awareness, the Genocide Aware-a-thon raised more than $1,400 for the Jewish World Watch's solar cooker project. The Jewish World Watch, an organization that helps raise awareness of and combats human rights violations, provides solar cookers for women in refugee camps. Each $30 donation provides one cooker. Without a cooker, women are often sent out to collect firewood, a task that can take one hour to one full day to complete. While looking for firewood, many women are raped and beaten by enemy militias.

When 17-year-old Sarah Katz, the organizer of the event and BBYO's Lake Ontario regional vice-president, first heard about the genocide in Darfur, it hit close to home.

"It has to do with the fact that my grandparents are Holocaust survivors," she said.

Katz, learned about the genocide in her high school civics class and participated in a Darfur rally.

"I just kept picturing my grandparents being in these situations. It was very heart-wrenching. I started researching, reading about it. It got me emotional, that turned into fuel to be proactive."

When planning the event, Katz first wanted to recreate a refugee camp, but eventually decided on an aware-a-thon.

"The whole program is meant to get people more aware… of themselves and other human beings around them and to see how we're inter-related," she said.

The first speaker of the night was Debbie Bodkin, a sergeant with the Waterloo Regional Police Service. Bodkin told the teenagers about her experience as a fact-finding volunteer for the United States and the United Nations in Darfur.

While in Darfur, Bodkin spent her days interviewing refugees. Their experiences were different, but their stories rarely changed. Many refugees spoke about being bombarded in their villages, first by government planes and trucks, and then by the Sudanese-supported Janjaweed militia. The militia would often beat and rape the women in the village and kill the remaining men.

"The youngest was seven, the oldest was 60 – both were gang raped," Bodkin told the teenagers.

"The overwhelming thing was the strength of the people," she said, adding that, before they told their stories, the women would often offer Bodkin food and water, both of which were in short supply.

For Ismail Adam, the second speaker of the night, the aware-a-thon demonstrates the power of charity.

Adam is the president of the Darfur Association of Canada, a non-profit organization that raises awareness about the genocide in Darfur, and has been to several similar events.

"Just to learn to give – it's a powerful thing to do. People who learn early in life the value of giving will be leaders of the world," he said.

From left are Michelle Covant, Orly Taub, Stacey Ramelson, Sarah Anderson and Kelly Indarjit at the Art for Darfur workshop. Their artwork is a response to their participation in BBYO's Genocide Aware-a-thon.

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Organization aims to boost soldiers' morale

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

IDF Col. (Res.) Geva Rapp, deputy commander of Israeli ground forces in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead, cancelled a planned visit to Toronto after cutting short a lecture tour in England, for fear of being arrested on charges of war crimes there.

Instead, Israeli lawyer Yehouda Zareskey replaced him in Toronto, beginning Jan. 29, as a representative of Panim el Panim (Face to Face), the non-profit organization Rapp founded to strengthen Jewish identity in Israeli soldiers. Zareskey spoke at a few Orthodox congregations, including Clanton Park Synagogue, and met with representatives of some Jewish day schools here.

Zareskey, 52 – a seventh-generation Israeli on his mother's side, who is currently volunteering for Panim el Panim – also met with Nir Sela, executive director of the Association for the Soldiers of Israel – Canada, and is beginning a Purim campaign under the auspices of the association to arrange for mishloach manot packages to be sent to soldiers in Israel.

According to the Jerusalem Post, Rapp was in England to explain Israel's position on the recent Gaza hostilities and refute media representations of what took place. On Jan. 29, about 80 pro-Palestinian protesters demonstrated outside the offices of the Union of Jewish Students in London, where Rapp was scheduled to speak. The event was cancelled, as were events in Manchester and New York, where Rapp was also expected to speak.

Zareskey, who was in Toronto for two weeks, said Rapp had been advised not to proceed with his trip to Toronto.

Rapp and Zareskey are contemporaries and religious Zionists, Zareskey said. He said that Rapp started Panim el Panim after Israel pulled out of Gaza and evicted settlers from Gush Katif in 2005. He wanted to boost the morale of religious Israeli soldiers, and give strength to non-religious Israelis who are about to begin their Israel Defence Forces (IDF) service.

"[Rapp's] message is *achdut Yisrael*," Zareskey told The CJN in an interview at Clanton Park, referring to Jewish unity both within Israel among different segments of the community, and between Israel and the Diaspora. "This is the main thing Israel needs."

Panim el Panim also works with Israelis on kibbutzim, he added.

Yehouda Zareskey

Through the organization, IDF soldiers have received about 1,000 e-mails of support from Jewish students in Toronto.

Zareskey said IDF soldiers are fighting not only for Israel but on behalf of the Diaspora. "This is against terror. In Israel, we say that there is not a country in the world that missiles will come to their citizens for eight years, [and they will not fight back]. It's not eight days. It's not eight months. It's eight years... It's our right to protect ourselves."

He said Rapp planned to share first-hand accounts of the war in Gaza and explain Israel's right to defend itself.

Zareskey also said Panim el Panim "does conversations about the [IDF's] values... to behave like human beings."

There are about 70 IDF soldiers who are from Toronto originally, Zareskey said. He spoke of the possibility of Toronto institutions "adopting" units with Toronto-born soldiers to boost their morale.

Nir Sela, executive director of the Association for the Soldiers of Israel – Canada, said Panim el Panim is one of a few dozen organizations in Israel that do similar work. "They are trying to build connections between people with different [political and religious] points of view."

The association is the largest charity in Israel and the only one authorized to work with the IDF, Sela said. "We try to help the soldiers with all their spiritual, educational and well-being needs."

For further information, call 416-783-3053 or go to www.asicanada.org.

Netivot holds 25th anniversary reunion

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Netivot HaTorah Day School will hold an alumni reunion in Toronto Feb. 22, as part of a series of events to celebrate the school's 25th anniversary. The Sunday evening reunion will be held at the school.

More than 100 people were expected to attend an earlier reunion last Friday at Neot Kedumim in Israel, where 25 trees were to be planted to mark the occasion. About 16 per cent of Netivot's almost 900 graduates have made aliyah, according to the school's director of development Alan Steinfeld.

Netivot's anniversary celebrations, including in-school programs for current students, will culminate with a gala dinner in Toronto May 25.

The coeducational Orthodox school runs from nursery to Grade 8, and held its first classes in September 1984 at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue. It has been in its own building in Thornhill since September 1993.

Of the 550 students currently at the school, at least four are children of alumni.

Rabbi Elliott Diamond, the school's Jewish studies vice-principal, said that some of the school's almost 900 graduates "have already started to evolve as leaders in communities.

"We are so pleased that over the last 25 years, 900 young men and women have been exposed to a vibrant and exciting vision of Orthodoxy," he said. "We are confident that the lessons they learned... will help them contribute to an unfolding future."

Further information about the reunion is available at www.netivot.com.

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UNRWA piqued

Even UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) officials, notoriously belligerent against Israel in the fulfilment of their duties as the world's public trustees, of sorts, on behalf of Palestinian "refugees" and only Palestinian "refugees," were sufficiently bothered with Hamas that they publicly announced last Friday they would temporarily suspend distribution of humanitarian aid throughout Gaza.

The agency made the announcement after Hamas, the day before, seized control of UNRWA warehouses, stole some 200 tons of food and supplies and 10 trucks in which the supplies were delivered. Earlier in the week, Hamas police officers stole thousands of blankets and food parcels from UNRWA meant for needy Gazans.

As of this writing, talks were being held between Hamas and UNRWA to resolve their respective differences.

UNRWA, it must be recalled, was established in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 to provide education, health and social services to the Palestinian people. It remains, to this very day, the only UN agency that assists one single, regionally defined group of refugees. That third- and fourth-generation Palestinians living wherever they do should still be defined as "refugees" strains logic, common sense, decency and historical precedent. Far worse, however, it carves deep into the psyches of Palestinians and many other peoples (of the Middle East and further afield, too) a false but pitiable sense of Palestinian victimization. And thus it prolongs Palestinian misery.

The need to reform UNRWA was trumpeted last week by one of its own former top officials. In a report titled Fixing UNRWA: Repairing the UN's Troubled System of Aid to Palestinian Refugees, James Lindsay, a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a former attorney with the U.S. Justice Department and then UNRWA's general counsel from 2002 until 2007, urged the agency to "halt its one-sided political statements and limit itself to comments on humanitarian issues: take additional steps to ensure the agency is not employing or providing benefits to terrorists and criminals; and allow the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), or some other neutral entity, to provide balanced and discrimination-free textbooks for UNRWA initiatives."

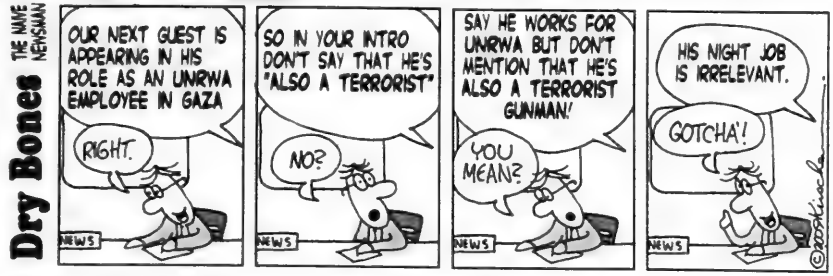
Lindsay also suggested that UNRWA services should be extended to individuals who truly need them and not to those who continue to claim them by virtue of their status as "refugee".

Not surprisingly, Andrew Whitley, director of the UNRWA in New York, criticized the report. "Someone reading this paper with no background," Whitely said, "would assume that the Israeli government was a benign actor. No mention is made of the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip."

With this quite revealing statement of rebuttal, Whitley proved Lindsay's case. It's our view that UNRWA should be disbanded and that aid should be distributed to the Palestinians in the way that other groups receive it from the UN. But reform of UNRWA along Lindsay's lines would be a good, second-best alternative.

25 years ago in The CJN

Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel was charged with unlawfully publishing false information about the Holocaust. Tight security kept Zundel and his followers separate from protesters at the Toronto courthouse where he appeared. The case was launched by Sabina Citron, a survivor and founder of the Canadian Holocaust Remembrance Association.


Dry Bones
THE NAIVE NEWSMAN
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NO?
SAY HE WORKS FOR UNRWA BUT DON'T MENTION THAT HE'S ALSO A TERRORIST GUNMAN!
YOU MEAN?
HIS NIGHT JOB IS IRRELEVANT.
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NEWS
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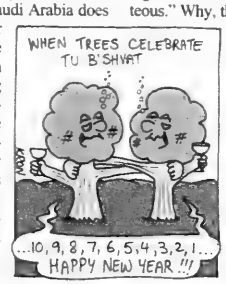
Anti-Semitism at rallies

It should come as no shock to Canadian Jews that recent rallies across Canada and throughout the world in support of Hamas should contain vile and hateful comments about Jews in general and Israel in particular. Palestinian children are taught from the moment they are able to read that all Jews are their enemies and Palestinian maps still do not show the existence of the State of Israel. Saudi Arabia does not permit the presence of a synagogue or even to allow Jews to visit that country. The United Nations Human Rights Commission passes resolution after resolution branding Israel as a virtual criminal entity. It is, therefore, no wonder that we are witnessing a rise in overt anti-Semitism and anti-Israel rhetoric. Fortunately, Canada now unabashedly supports Israel's right to exist and condemns the expressions of hatred and intolerance. Truth and justice will prevail when all countries in the world are held to same standard being demanded of Israel.



Bert Raphael
Toronto

* * *

Outraged, disappointed by CJN column

Please permit me to express my outrage and disappointment at Jesse Mintz's column, "Bombing Gaza university was a bad idea (CJN, Jan. 22).

He introduces his subject with the premise that the readers are aware of the issue and may have come down on either side of the equation, some believing that "Hamas is a terrorist organization," others that "Israel is an occupying power." For any fair-minded person who may be even remotely aware of the facts about Israel's experience with Hamas and Gaza, to weigh the two in the same balance is astonishing.

From this false start, he proceeds to "act according to his moral compass," and from all the myriad of subjects with regard to Israel's experience in Gaza, he decides to criticize Israel for bombing the Islamic University. He concludes that Israel's contention that it did so was because the university was "used as a storehouse for Hamas arms" is not true. He cites, as his proof, "many analysts" and "some writing for Ha'aretz."

He bemoans this terrible tragedy that Israel has wreaked on this august body of learning and its students. He refers to its 20,000 students and 10 faculties. Does he not wonder what was being taught there?

Letters to editors all over the world are inundated with criticisms of Israel, real and imagined. We, the readers of The CJN, expect a little better.

Sam Mitnick
Cote St. Luc, Que.

Supporters give Israel uncritical reverence

Jack Kopyto says that The CJN "should reflect only the righteous side, which is Israel" ("CJN should reflect Israel's side only," CJN letters, Jan. 22). I presume he is aware that in Israel itself, there is a variety of views expressed in the media, the Knesset and the street. Not everyone in Israel regards the Israeli government or its actions in Gaza as "righteous." Why, then, should Jewish publications in Canada (or even general interest publications) be nothing more than uncritical cheering sections for the Israeli government?

It seems that many supporters of the Israeli government admire its democratic aspects in theory, but ignore them in practice, giving Israel uncritical reverence.

Carl Rosenberg
Vancouver

* * *

Orthodox conversion standards

It is not surprising that Rabbi Avi Shafran of the Agudath Israel of America fully supports the haredi rabbinate that controls the conversion process in Israel and, consequently, worldwide ("Orthodox cherish fellow Jews," CJN letters, Jan. 29). This haredi rabbinate has unfortunately imposed such exacting standards of conversion that it ultimately only embraces a very small percentage of non-Orthodox Jews and rejects many qualified and legitimate converts. Rabbi Shafran compares those who promulgate a less strict view of halachic conversion to those who espouse a less traditional, progressive and hence less scientific approach to medicine. This is in contrast with the haredim, whom Rabbi Shafran views as akin to the progenitors of mainstream medical thought and practice. A more apt comparison, however, would be that the haredi approach to conversion is like a doctor whose practice is restricted to the most compliant of patients, as opposed to a doctor who is open to the vast majority of ordinary folk seeking medical care and attention.

It is true that we need to enforce high and meaningful standards for conversion, but must they be as stringent as they have become under the haredi watch? Rabbi Marc Angel of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, himself an Orthodox rabbi and scholar, said it best earlier this year: "The Halachah provides leeway and multiple views about the nature of the conversion process. Halachic Judaism should not be constricted to only one halachic view, and certainly not to the most rigid and restrictive view. It must be recognized that different legitimate halachic positions are available."

Joseph Y. Adler
Toronto

LET THEM GO...
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Did Daniel Pearl die in vain?

By JUDEA PEARL

Judea Pearl

This week marks the seventh anniversary of the murder of our son, former Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. My wife Ruth and I wonder: would Danny have believed that today's world emerged after his tragedy?

The answer does not come easily. Danny was an optimist, a true believer in the goodness of mankind. Yet he was also a realist, and would not let idealism bend the harshness of facts.

Neither he, nor the millions who were shocked by his murder, could have possibly predicted that seven years later his abductor, Omar Saeed Sheikh, according to several South Asian reports, would be planning terror acts from the safety of a Pakistani jail. Or that his murderer, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, now in Guantanamo, would proudly boast of his murder in a military tribunal in March 2007 to the cheers of sympathetic jihadi supporters. Or that this ideology of barbarism would be celebrated in European and American universities, fuelling rally after rally for Hamas, Hezbollah and other heroes of "the resistance." Or that another kidnapped young man, Israeli Gilad Schalit, would spend his 950th day of captivity with no Red Cross visitation while world leaders seriously debate whether his kidnappers deserve international recognition.

No. Those around the world who mourned for Danny in 2002 genuinely hoped that Danny's murder would be a turning point in the history of man's inhumanity to man, and that the targeting of innocents to transmit political messages would quickly become, like slavery and human sacrifice, an embarrassing relic of a bygone era.

But somehow, barbarism, often cloaked in the language of "resistance," has gained acceptance in the most elite circles of our society. The words "war on terror" cannot be uttered today without fear of offence. Civilized society, so it seems, is so numbed by violence that it has lost its gift to be disgusted by evil.

I believe it all started with well-meaning analysts, who in their zeal to find creative solutions to terror decided that terror is not a real enemy, but a tactic. Thus the basic engine that propels acts of terrorism – the ideological licence to elevate one's grievances above the norms of civilized society – was wished away in favour of seemingly more manageable "tactical" considerations.

Our luminaries must stop making excuses for terror, Pearl's father says

This mentality of surrender then worked its way through politicians like the former mayor of London, Ken Livingstone. In July 2005, he told Sky News that suicide bombing is almost man's second nature. "In an unfair balance, that's what people use," Livingstone explained.

But the clearest endorsement of terror as a legitimate instrument of political bargaining came from former U.S. president Jimmy Carter. In his book Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid, Carter appeals to the sponsors of suicide bombing. "It is imperative that the general Arab community and all significant Palestinian groups make it clear that they will end the suicide bombings and other acts of terrorism when international laws and the ultimate goals of the [internationally sponsored 'road map' peace plan] are accepted by Israel." Acts of terror, according to Carter, are no longer taboo, but effective tools for terrorists to address perceived injustices.

Carter's logic has become the dominant paradigm in rationalizing terror. When asked what Israel should do to stop Hamas' rockets aimed at innocent civilians, the Syrian first lady, Asma Assad, did not hesitate for a moment in her response: "They should end the occupation." In other words, terror must earn a dividend before it is stopped.

The media have played a major role in handing terrorism this victory of acceptability. Qatari-based Al Jazeera television, for example, is still providing Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi hours of free air time each week to spew his hateful interpretation of the Qur'an, authorize suicide bombing, and call for jihad against Jews and Americans.

Then came the August 2008 birthday of Samir Kuntar, the unrepentant killer who, in 1979, smashed the head of a four-year-old Israeli girl with his rifle after killing her father before her eyes. Al Jazeera elevated Kuntar to heroic heights with orchestras, fireworks and sword dances, presenting him to 50 million viewers as Arab society's role model. No mainstream western media outlet dared to expose Al Jazeera's efforts to warp its young viewers into the likes of Kuntar. Al Jazeera's management continues to receive royal treatment in all major press clubs.

Some American pundits and TV anchors didn't seem much different from Al Jazeera in their analysis of the recent war in Gaza. Bill Moyers was quick to lend Hamas legitimacy as a "resistance" movement, together with honorary membership in PBS's imaginary "cycle of violence." In his Jan. 9 TV show, Moyers explained to his viewers that "each [side] greases the cycle of violence, as one man's terrorism becomes another's resistance to oppression." He then stated – without blushing – that for readers of the Hebrew Bible, "God-soaked violence became genetically coded." The "cycle of violence" platitude allows analysts to empower terror with the guise of reciprocity, and, amazingly, indict terror's victims for violence as immutable as DNA.

Daniel Pearl

When we ask ourselves what it is about the American psyche that enables genocidal organizations such as Hamas – the charter of which would offend every neuron in our brains – to become tolerated in public discourse, we should take a hard look at our universities and the way they are currently being manipulated by terrorist sympathizers.

At my own university, UCLA, a recent symposium on human rights turned into a Hamas recruitment rally by a clever academic gimmick. The director of the Center for Near East Studies carefully selected only Israel bashers for the panel, each of whom concluded that the Jewish state is the greatest criminal in human history.

The primary purpose of the event was evident the morning after, when unsuspecting, uninvolved students read an article in the campus newspaper titled, "Scholars say: Israel is in violation of human rights in Gaza," to which the good name of the University of California was attached. This is where Hamas scored its main triumph – another inch of academic respectability, another inroad into western minds.

Danny's picture is hanging just in front of me, his warm smile as reassuring as ever. But I find it hard to look him straight in the eyes and say: "You did not die in vain."

Judea Pearl is a professor of computer science at UCLA and president of the Daniel Pearl Foundation, founded in memory of his son to promote cross-cultural understanding.

An injured woman comforts her child as she is being taken to hospital for treatment following a rocket attack during the recent Gaza conflict. ***[Israel photo]***

Opinions

On specious comparisons

We make comparisons all the time. But not all things are comparable. Lately, I have wondered why so many people glibly compare Israel or Israeli fighters to Nazis. How is it that they seem to know so much about the experience of the Jews during the war? How is it that some Holocaust deniers now seem to be able to use the Holocaust when it suits them to cast the first stone? How is it that they dare besmirch the memory of so many without knowing the reality, then or now?

Norma Baumel Joseph in Montreal

What is comparable in the current situation?

Israel left Gaza, leaving the land to the Palestinians. Did the Nazis leave Jews land with housing and farms? Hamas has been raining rockets on Israeli towns for more than seven years. Who is Nazi-like in this picture? Those who attack civilians steadily, without cause, simply because they're Jewish?

Israel waited with great patience, then acted in self defence. Again we ask: how is this comparable? Were the Nazis acting in self defence against the Jews, or are nations upset that Jews finally have an army with which to defend themselves? Is that where the foul comparison comes from?

Are we faced with an aggressive verbal assault to cover up the shame of loss? Too many Palestinians have died. That is tragic, but who is to blame? This is the crux of the ridiculous disproportionality claim. Israel was successful in defending and protecting its people. It built shelters and an early warning system so that the rockets from Gaza were not mass killers. Hamas did no such thing. Instead of shelters, they hid rocket launchers in schools and hospitals, guaranteeing loss of life. Who is to blame for the deadly imbalance? Hamas. And Israel should be credited with the many lives saved on both sides of the conflict.

So who is Nazi-like?

Think, dear friends, when so many cry that human rights are being violated, think of their comparisons. Many human rights are being violated, but the culprits aren't Israelis. Hamas and its supporters have violated everyone's rights, but most seriously those of their own people. Just recently, we saw videos of Hamas agents torturing and killing Fatah soldiers. How come none of our liberal friends who take out ads criticizing Israel and comparing it to Nazis spoke out once against such atrocities? Where are their voices?

Where were their voices when Jews were terrorized and expelled from Arab lands?

And what does Hamas want in the end? No Israel, and no Jews in the region!

What was the Nazis' goal? That Europe would be Judenrein.

So who are the modern-day Nazis? Make the comparison.

What the Pope is really up to

With the recent announcement that Pope Benedict has reinstated four bishops who had been excommunicated as schismatic, we have entered a new phase of Jewish-Catholic relationships, and not a good one.

Jean M. Gerber in Vancouver

It's not the place of a non-Catholic to take issue with what Catholics find heretical. What should give pause is the reinstatement of Holocaust denier Bishop Richard Williamson.

Equally disturbing are the pallid responses of Jewish civil servants to this latest outrage against Jews.

ADL leader Abraham Foxman (in the New York Times, on Jan. 25) wrote that this reinstatement "could provide succor to those whose views threaten the Jewish people and the church's desire to improve and deepen its relationship with us to benefit all mankind." Rabbi David Rosen of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (in the same source) called on the Vatican to "reiterate its unqualified repudiation and condemnation of… any Holocaust denial."

Israeli interfaith organizations and the rabbinate have written similar responses.

Well, that should certainly make a difference. Not.

The Pope's decision is in direct response to a letter sent by the Society of Pius X, which itself was founded in 1970 in opposition to, and in open conflict with, the liberalizing reforms of Vatican II that opened a meaningful dialogue between Jews and Catholics.

In a letter to Germany's 27 official bishops in October, the director of the society's German branch, Rev. Franz Schmidberger, wrote that Jews "are not 'our older brothers in faith.'" Instead, he wrote, "for as long as they do not distance themselves from their forefathers' guilt through the avowal of Christ's divinity and baptism, they are complicit in the deicide," according to a copy of the letter available on the society's website.

Pope Benedict himself has a totally different agenda for the church, and it certainly does not include making nice with the Jews. Foxman et al can write all the letters they want. Just get out of the Pope's way, because his train is not going down that track.

This latest incident is not the only indicator that the Pope plans to follow in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor: the late (and not by us lamented) Pope Pius XII – who, by the way, Benedict recently set on the road to sainthood. This is the man whom author John Cornwell calls "Hitler's Pope." Pius XII, in turn, followed Pius X's anti-modernizing program for the Church.

But he was much worse. As Hitler began his campaign of genocide, Pius XII stepped out of the way in return for hegemony over the Church hierarchy, signing a pact with Hitler that in effect withdrew the Church from denouncing the war against the Jews.

If this chain seems tenuous, it's not. There's a clear connection between Pius X, XII, and Benedict. Their goal: to assure the supremacy of the papacy, and to oppose any acknowledgement of the validity of other faiths, and certainly any of the reforms derived from Vatican II.

That includes detente with the Jews, who, in any case, face eternal damnation, since there is no salvation outside the Church. That's another tenet of the present pope, who has written much on how the other Christian denominations – never mind Jews and Muslims – rate lower in the scale of salvation.

Hitler's Pope: the Secret History of Pius XII, by Cornwell, documents the way Pius XII manoeuvred to remove resistance to Hitler by Church officials, many of whom were appalled by Nazi Germany.

Why? Because control of doctrine and the vast engine of the Church were Pius' goals. Those same goals, through a smaller but doctrinally pure Catholic Church, are also the goals of Benedict.

The victims in this are those Catholics who want to remain in the Church yet want it to embrace a wider spectrum of faith, while at the same time maintaining the spiritual strength that the Catholic faith offers them.

It's not our job to tell the church what to do. But having been the victims of its disregard of atrocity once, we can only watch as it prepares to eat its own, or at least to turn them away, as it were, at the door of the cathedral.

Hatred at home

Reflect back in time to 2001 and the fiasco in Durban, South Africa, where the United Nations convened the World Conference Against Racism to address the systemic issues of racism in many parts of the modern world.

Gerald L. Gall in Edmonton

With meticulous planning, the Palestinian "lobby" used this forum as a means of attacking and vilifying Israel under the guise of a world conference that should have had little to do with Middle Eastern politics.

Those who attended the preparatory committee meetings earlier that year in Geneva and elsewhere saw the writing on the wall – Durban was going to be exploited by hostile forces to lash out at Israel. But no one expected Durban to become the site of what turned out to be rampant anti-Semitism.

As seen too often throughout history, various calamities, including the bubonic plague, have been blamed on and turned into attacks against Jews.

In Durban, there were anti-Semitic signs and pamphlets, and there were demonstrations at which banners and T-shirts displayed images of swastikas and even Hitler's face. There were threats of physical violence, and the Jews who were attending the conference in search of dialogue and solutions to fight racism became the victims of hate. And on it went.

Many in attendance commented that never since the dark days of Nazi Germany had there been such unparallelled, systematic displays of open propaganda against Jews. The threats and incitement to hate were so pronounced that, had they occurred in Canada, they would have violated the hate propaganda provisions of our Criminal Code. They probably also violated South African laws, however, since the conference occurred on property temporarily designated as falling under the jurisdiction of the United Nations, nothing was done about it.

Fast forward to Canada in 2009 and the pro-Hamas, anti-Israel demonstrations in Montreal (on Jan. 4 and 10) and Toronto (on Jan. 10) occurring as a result of the Hamas-initiated fighting in Gaza. These displays quickly became ugly, exhibitions of anti-Semitism. These examples of anti-Jewish hatred were widely reported, and a number of YouTube videos captured demonstrators shouting chilling threats against Jews ("Jews are our dogs!" and "Jewish child… you're gonna f'n die. Hamas is coming for you!").

We know from recent international reports that such expressions of hate can lead to actual violence. This recently occurred in both London and Antwerp.

Canada is a nation that encourages freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of association. These are constitutionally protected rights in Section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We recognize that dissent is part of the Canadian experience, and the Charter permits peaceful assembly and encourages legitimate expressions of protest.

But the anti-Israel protests turned into ugly exhibitions of hate against Jews. It was shocking to witness this kind of thing in South Africa, but we certainly do not expect to experience this in our Canadian cities.

Who spoke out against these protests against Israel that became shameful, raw, anti-Jewish attacks?

To his credit, at least one prominent politician did so. On Jan. 15, Jason Kenny, the minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, stated, in part, that "the open incitement of hatred has absolutely no place in Canadian society." There were also editorials to that effect in the Montreal Gazette, the Chronicle Herald and the Ottawa Citizen. But most of Canada was silent.

The Middle Eastern conflict should never become a reason to incite hatred against Jews. We all assume, perhaps incorrectly, that all Canadians, irrespective of their backgrounds, would not succumb to the vicious and hateful expressions of anti-Semitism that characterized these protests in our cities.

Canada is a civilized nation, respecting people's right to hold varied opinions. But we must draw the line when legitimate expression becomes displays of criminal hatred.

The United Nations is planning a followup conference "against" racism later this year in Geneva at an event commonly referred to as "Durban II." There are already many signs suggesting that the conference will, once again, primarily focus upon the Middle East conflict and evolve into another anti-Semitic forum. Fortunately, Canada has had the good sense not to participate. One Durban was certainly enough.

We must be vigilant against anti-Jewish and all other forms of hatred in Canada and must speak out strongly whenever and wherever they occur.

The Kirshner File

War underscored divisions among Palestinians

The recent three-week war in the Gaza Strip was a showcase for bitter Palestinian rivalries and a reminder that efforts to defuse the internecine warfare among Palestinian factions have failed miserably.

As Israel and Hamas fought a series of battles that ended with an uneasy truce last month, Hamas and its rival, Fatah, squabbled openly and demonstrably, pushing back the already dim chances for Palestinian reconciliation and unity. Yet long before the Gaza war broke out, Fatah, secular nationalist in orientation, and Hamas, steeped in Islamic piety, were deeply at odds.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Fatah, having recognized Israel, has negotiated with the Jewish state and supports a two-state solution to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Hamas, having rejected Israel's very existence, calls for an Islamic state in its place.

This past December, Fatah urged Hamas to renew the six-month ceasefire along Gaza's border with Israel, but Hamas archly ignored the plea, thereby touching off the war.

As well, Fatah and Hamas cannot agree on the nature of a future Palestinian state. Should it be built on the foundations of secularism or Islamic fundamentalism?

A fourth contentious issue turns on power. Should the Palestinian Authority – an organ controlled by Fatah and backed by Israel, the United States and the European Union – be the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people? Or should Hamas, supported by Iran and Syria, be in charge?

The Palestinians are also at loggerheads over which faction should control the Rafah border crossing adjacent to Egypt. With Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, the Rafah terminal was administered by the Palestinian Authority and European Union monitors, but this arrangement fell by the wayside, and today, Hamas wants a role in its operation.

These contentious issues assumed greater prominence and stoked still more tension after Hamas won the parliamentary elections in the Palestinian territories in January 2006 on a platform of reform and change. With Hamas' victory at the polls, Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza – a Hamas stronghold – in an attempt to undermine the Islamic regime. The Israeli government also convinced the United States, Canada and the European Union that the siege should remain in place until Hamas recognized Israel, renounced terrorism and accepted previous agreements entered into by Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Meanwhile, the security forces of Fatah and Hamas engaged in periodic armed clashes, particularly in Gaza. Early in 2007, Saudi Arabia intervened, inviting Fatah and Hamas representatives to meet for reconciliation talks in the city of Mecca. The purpose of the negotiations was two-fold: to stop the intermittent fighting and end Israel's blockade.

The two sides finally signed a power-sharing accord – the Mecca Agreement – in February 2007, under which Fatah's Mahmoud Abbas retained the presidency of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas' Ismail Haniyeh was named prime minister of the national unity government. Israel was disappointed by the outcome, Abbas having failed to convince Haniyeh to recognize Israel or give up violence. Hamas, however, expressed "respect" for agreements that Israel and the Palestinian Authority had signed.

To no one's surprise, the shelf life of the two-headed Palestinian government was of brief duration. Tensions escalated, climaxing with a full-blown civil war in which Hamas seized Gaza in June 2007. Appalled by Hamas' rout of Fatah, Israel tightened the blockade of Gaza, an impoverished enclave with 1.5 million inhabitants, many of them refugees.

Egypt, playing the role of honest broker, tried to defuse the power struggle by tabling a set of proposals. A new Palestinian government, consisting solely of politically independent figures, would be established. The Palestinian security forces would be restructured. Hamas would rescind its takeover of Gaza. Fresh presidential and parliamentary elections would be held in Gaza and the West Bank.

Yet even as these sweeping proposals were discussed, Hamas announced it would not recognize Abbas as president of the Palestinian Authority after his five-year term of office expired on Jan. 9, 2009.

With the impasse deepening and Fatah and Hamas blaming each other for the failure of Egypt's mediation efforts, the Egyptians threw up their hands in despair, suggesting that the Fatah-Hamas split was morphing into a permanent phenomenon. By the autumn of 2008, it was reported, many young Palestinian men in the West Bank affiliated with Hamas had begun to shave their beards out of fear of being arrested by Fatah police.

Shortly afterward, following Hamas' refusal to extend the shaky truce and its shelling of Israeli communities near the border, Israel uncorked Operation Cast Lead.

In response, Abbas pointed a finger of guilt at Hamas, blaming its leaders for having provoked Israel with "acts of foolishness."

As Israel escalated its offensive in Gaza and Hamas called for a third intifadah, the Palestinian Authority banned protesters in West Bank towns from expressing solidarity with Hamas by hoisting its flag, chanting pro-Hamas slogans or marching toward Israeli army checkpoints and Jewish settlements. In one instance, Palestinian police used tear gas to break up a demonstration. As part of its crackdown, Fatah rounded up hundreds of Hamas supporters, including a number of journalists. These measures were reportedly carried out in co-ordination with Israel.

During a break in Palestinian reconciliation talks in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, two years ago this month, major Palestinian figures gathered for prayer at a mosque. Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority, is seen third from left. He stands next to Hamas rivals Khaled Meshal and Ismail Haniyeh.

[RNS/Reuters photo]

On a rhetorical level, the Palestinian Authority stepped up its verbal attacks on Hamas. Tayeb Abdel Rahim, a senior aide to Abbas, charged Hamas with holding the Palestinians in Gaza hostage and exploiting "the Israeli massacres against our people to strengthen its position." Yasser Abed Rabbo, another senior Fatah official, accused Hamas of seeking to create an "emirate of darkness" in Gaza and permanently separate Gaza from the West Bank. Still other Fatah officials said that supporters in Gaza had been detained, kneecapped and murdered.

Once Israel expanded its military operation with a ground invasion of Gaza, Abbas shifted course, lashing out at Israel. He denounced Israel's action as "barbaric and criminal," called for an immediate ceasefire, claimed Israel had no interest in peace and threatened to pull out of peace talks with Israel.

Even as he excoriated Israel, Abbas declined to suspend the Palestinian Authority's security co-operation with Jerusalem.

Once the war wound down, Hamas' top official in Syria, Khaled Meshal – the object of an Israeli assassination attempt in 1997 – claimed that the Palestine Liberation Organization, controlled by Fatah, had deepened "divisions" in Palestinian ranks. In a bombshell, he declared that the Palestinians required a brand new leadership. Meshal's schismatic statement won the support of such radical Syrian-based Palestinian groups as Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

The Palestinian Authority was livid, saying that Iran and Syria had encouraged Hamas to challenge its leadership. Since then, Abbas has ruled out further reconciliation talks with Hamas unless it accepts the supremacy of the PLO. Adopting a cooler approach, Egypt has proposed a renewal of such negotiations later this month.

There have been suggestions that the war strengthened Hamas – which fought back, never surrendered and continued firing missiles at Israel until the last day – and weakened Fatah, which, critics said, was essentially in league with Israel and did not do nearly enough to stop the carnage in Gaza. This analysis may prove to be correct one day, but for now, Fatah and Hamas are still bitterly vying for dominance and for the hearts and minds of Palestinians.

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Women of Baycrest 2008-09 campaign co-chairs Rhonda Litwack, left, and Lynn Posluns, centre, are seen with Dr. Tiffany Chow, the first neuroscientist to be supported by Women of Baycrest.

Women's brain health focus of Baycrest fund

By RITA POLIAKOV
Special to The CJN

Seventy per cent of those who suffer from Alzheimer's disease are female, according to new statistics released by the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

It was this news that sparked the campaign recently launched by Women of Baycrest to fund research into Alzheimer's that will focus primarily on women's brain health.

"I wanted to create an annual campaign that would be unique, [a campaign] where money would go towards funding research," said Lynn Posluns, the campaign co-chair. "It's a given fact that women are the primary caregivers. We have to keep ourselves healthy. If we can focus fundraising on brain health, it will benefit our daughters and granddaughters."

Women of Baycrest is a network of women who run an annual fundraising campaign to support new initiatives in women's health and aging and women brain scientists, and ensure that research is relevant and sensitive to women's brain health concerns. Alzheimer's, the most common form of dementia, is a progressive neurological disease.

Baycrest, which focuses on health sciences and cares for aging adults, has set a goal of $3 million for this campaign. Women can join by buying a membership, which costs $1,800. The money will eventually fund a new research chair in women's brain health at the centre.

The current campaign, officially launched on Jan. 28, supports Dr. Tiffany Chow, a clinician-scientist at the Rotman Research Institute and staff behavioural neurologist at Baycrest's Brain Health Centre Memory Disorders Clinic. The funds will be used to hire a post-doctoral fellow to work with Chow on Alzheimer's research.

"I think the group here is very keen on things that are impacting women more than men," Chow said at the campaign launch.

"We need fresh ideas," she added. "One clue into why the disease targets woman may be the mitochondria.

"Every cell in your body has mitochondria, which are like energy batteries. If they're not working well, the cell will die."

Chow said the DNA that forms mitochondria comes from the mother, a fact that may be related to the question of why women are more vulnerable to Alzheimer's.

"The findings can have some really huge ripples across neuro-degenerative disorders… Everyone's afraid of them. Right now, we can say, 'We understand what you have,' but we don't have anything that stops the progression."

Organizing the campaign only took about six weeks. Posluns, along with co-chair Rhonda Litwack, secured sponsors including the Globe and Mail, HMV and Dermalogica. Some 150 guests attended the launch, which cost $75 for members and $95 for non-members. So far, the campaign has more than 100 people committed to membership.

"I move quickly," Posluns said. "The more we talk to women… the more you hear, 'Yes, do it.' One reason is, a great group of people got on board quickly. It started to have momentum on its own."

For Charlotte Tessis, 58, who has been involved with Baycrest since her teen years, this campaign is an important one.

"I was a candystriper at Baycrest as a teen. Baycrest was good to my grandparents, my parents," she said at the launch. "Women should care [about this campaign] because they're women."

When Tessis, a past fundraising co-chair, first heard of the initiative, she was on board, as was her husband.

"I told my husband, 'I'm going to become a member.' When I told him, he said, 'Why wouldn't you? It's a natural thing, of course you would.' There was nothing to discuss," she said.

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Report sexual abuse of kids, panel urges

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

When religiously observant girls learn to dress modestly to avoid tempting "boys who have no control over their animal behaviour," and they end up being sexually abused, they may feel partially responsible, according to Judy Klitsner, one of three speakers at a recent Torah in Motion event.

The Jan. 15 panel discussion at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation addressed "Keeping Our Children Safe: What Families and Communities Can Do." A senior lecturer at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, Klitsner has written in the New York Jewish Week about being abused as a teenager by Rabbi Baruch Lanner when he headed the National Conference of Synagogue Youth.

Modesty, or tzniut, applies to vocabulary as much as to skirt length, said Michelle Friedman, a New York psychiatrist and assistant professor of psychiatry who also teaches pastoral counseling to rabbinical students at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah.

"If girls don't even know some of the terms for their own body parts, you feel like you're not supposed to know those words and you're not supposed to talk about it."

Rabbi Mark Dratch, founder of West Hempstead, N.Y.-based Jsafe: The Jewish Institute Supporting an Abuse-Free Environment and a former spiritual leader of Shaarei Shomayim, was unequivocal in urging people to talk about sexual abuse and report it after it has occurred.

"Let it be said very clearly, when there's a positive purpose for which the information is shared, it's not prohibited speech. It's mandated speech."

In the Orthodox community, victims of sexual abuse are often concerned that if it becomes known that there has been abuse in the family, there will be a negative impact on shidduchim (marriage matches), Rabbi Dratch said.

"I would much rather have my child marry someone who had dealt with abuse in a responsible way than have dysfunction because abuse was not dealt with. I hope I'm not in the minority."

Silence is the oxygen of abuse, Klitsner stressed.

When she was 16, Rabbi Lanner attempted to strangle her after she rebuffed his advances and threatened to report him, she said.

In 2002, the New York Jewish Week reported that Rabbi Lanner had been sentenced to seven years in prison for sexually abusing two teenage girls in the early 1990s.

Klitsner didn't tell anyone what had happened to her, she said. "I was convinced that [Rabbi Lanner] was the king, and in his kingdom, everybody played by his rules."

She said she feared confronting him and feared that he was capable of doing or saying anything, and she also felt confused and guilty.

"My father was ill. My mother was busy with that, and [Rabbi Lanner] counted on the fact that I wouldn't want to involve them."

The worst part of abuse by a spiritual leader is the psychological and spiritual component, Klitsner said. "I've seen it in every denomination of Judaism, and in every branch of Orthodoxy. It's not worse in Orthodoxy, but it's not better, either."

The overwhelming majority of abuse accusations are true, Rabbi Dratch said.

But Klitsner said that rabbis often protect an abusive colleague, rationalizing that he "must have done tshuvah," that "some 14-year-olds are very mature," or saying, "Look at all the good he does... We can't afford to lose him.'

"I hope it's obvious this is unacceptable," she said.

Even worse, Klitsner added, is the attitude that if there was no physical assault, then "nothing happened."

The rabbi believes the rate of sexual abuse in the Jewish community is no different than it is in the larger community. He said that in the United States, one of every three or four women has been a victim of such abuse in her lifetime.

He said he would not want to ban physical touch between teachers and students of the same gender, as long as it is responsible and appropriate.

"When a student feels uncomfortable, it is clearly inappropriate." Also, he added, any touching "needs to be in public" with other people around.

He also suggested, as a matter of protocol, that rabbis and teachers should never be alone with a child.

Instead of a windowless office for a rabbi, Rabbi Dratch suggested that a window with a screen would provide confidentiality and be "in everybody's interest."

Friedman said it's important to teach children to tell a trusted adult if touching feels uncomfortable.

"Somebody can touch your cheek in a way that feels uncomfortable," she noted, adding that a hug can sometimes feel right.

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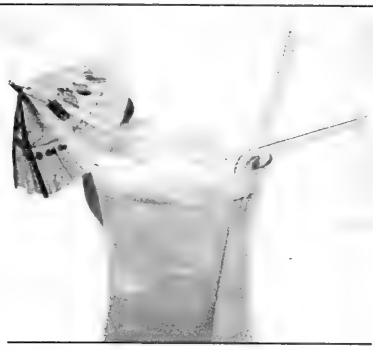

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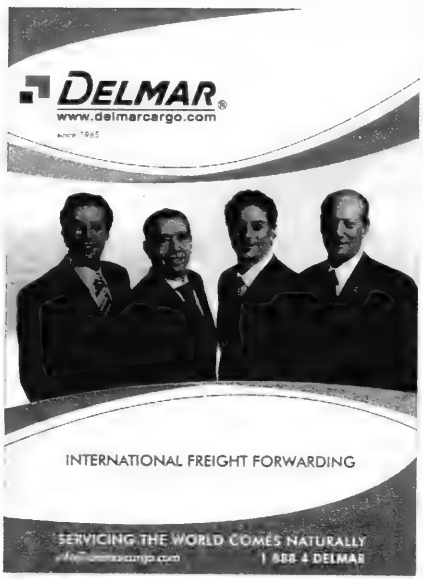

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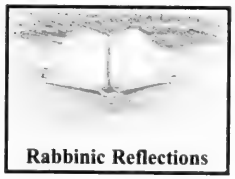
Jewish Life

What role does the rabbi play?

By RABBI CHAIM YOSEF ACKERMAN

Our Torah portion this week, Parshat Yitro, recounts how Moses' father-in-law brought offerings to God, joining Moses, Aaron, and the Elders in sitting down to dine "in front of God" (Exodus 18:12).



On this, the Talmud (Brachot 64a) quotes Rabbi Avin HaLevi as saying that this proves that anyone who partakes of a banquet at which a Torah scholar dines is considered as though they had enjoyed the Divine Presence itself.

While Nachmanides and Rabbi Ovadia Seforno say that this meal's purpose was to celebrate the conversion of Yitro, and that the meal was partially made up of the Shelamim offering that had been brought for the occasion, the Talmud feels that these reasons are not sufficient to be deemed "in front of Hashem," and only having Torah scholars present would suffice.

To further compound the issue, the situation was such that the participants had not even contributed anything to the Torah scholars, but rather had just partaken of a meal, a purely physical act devoid of any apparent spirituality.

The Talmud must be telling us of the effect that our association with the Torah's wisest can have upon us, and how closely related that is to our being around God Himself.

Obviously, a rabbi is not simply for ornamental purposes, or to round out a life-cycle event with the right sayings.

Yet if just spending time with our leaders provides spiritual uplifting, how much more can we gain by cultivating a meaningful relationship with them? The rabbi is to be a central figure in the Jewish home, helping young and old identify with their yiddishkeit, and, ultimately, with Hashem.

Rabbi Chaim Yosef Ackerman is assistant rabbi of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation.

Tikkun olam, Part 1

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

"Tikkun olam" is probably one of the resilient phrases in Jewish thought. Over the course of almost two millennia, it has been used in the context of everything from halachic law and mystical thought to the drive for universal social justice. Some people are enamoured with this phrase since it is so adaptable to modern needs. Critics argue that it is being bent out of shape to encompass almost any goal in mind. Today, a look at tikkun olam.

The phrase goes back almost 2,000 years and was used in the Mishnah when describing the rules for proper conduct between a divorcing husband and wife, the obligations for taking an oath or the rules for ransoming captives. In all cases, the expression used is *mipnei tikkun ha'olam* (literally, "for the sake of repairing the world" – or colloquially, "in the public interest"). **[tinyurl.com/tikkun05]**

Now jump ahead a few centuries to 16th-century Safed, in the mountains of Galilee, and mystic Rabbi Isaac Luria who explained the role of prayer and mitzvot in tikkun olam. Although kabbalistic teachings are difficult to summarize in a couple of sentences, here is how Lurianic Kabbalah is explained at the Wikipedia site. "According to this vision of the world, God contracted part of God's self into vessels of light to create the world. These vessels shattered and their shards became sparks of light trapped within the material of creation. Prayer, especially contemplation of various aspects of the divinity (*sephirot*), releases these sparks and allows them to reunite with God's essence." **[tinyurl.com/tikkun10]**

The phrase continued to display its endurance in the 20th century when tikkun olam began to take on a meaning that includes social responsibility for the world at large. The use of the phrase even outside Jewish circles is partly due to the establishment in 1986 of Tikkun Magazine, whose masthead reads "to heal, repair, and transform the world." The magazine's goals include "interdependence and ecological sanity," "supporting the struggles for social justice and peace," and "peace, justice and reconciliation for Israel and Palestine." The magazine's website carries Tikkun's 12,000-word Core Vision. **[tinyurl.com/tikkun08]**

Not everyone is pleased by the current multiplicity of meanings for tikkun olam. Writing in the Jewish Press, the University of Haifa's Steven Plaut delivers a stinging rebuke. "Tikkun olam, the 'correcting' of the universe, has little if anything to do with things like social inequality, environmental cleanliness, and distribution of wealth and jobs... tikkun olam is mentioned in a major place in the *Aleinu* prayer that closes all prayer sessions, but again it is in conjunction with the wish to see idolatry and paganism erased from the earth. There is no mention of 'social justice' or environmentalist issues, no gun control proposals and no AIDS marches." **[tinyurl.com/tikkun11]** (More on the debate over the limits of tikkun olam next week.)

Since the web is more than just text, I was curious to see how people express tikkun olam visually. When you plug the words into the search engine at flickr.com, you get more than 1,000 photos, including images of kiddush cups, flowers, tzedakah programs and beach clean-ups, along with some other images that I must admit I have difficulty associating with tikkun olam. **[tinyurl.com/tikkun06]**

Over at YouTube, there is an assortment of tikkun olam-related videos **[tinyurl.com/tikkun15]** including one that illustrates how the State of Israel has risen to the challenge by dedicating resources for international humanitarian missions, among them, assisting Mexican earthquake survivors (1985) and Albanian refugees (1999) and researching the spread and treatment of malaria in Anglola (1996). **[tinyurl.com/tikkun14]**

The phrase may date back to the Mishnah, but the phrase tikkun olam is as famous as last week's newscast. Or at least, last June. That's when then-presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama stood before the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. "As any Israeli will tell you, Israel is not a perfect place. But like the United States, it sets an example for all when it seeks a more perfect future. These same qualities can be found among American Jews. It is why so many Jewish-Americans have stood by Israel while advancing the American story, because there is a commitment embedded in the Jewish faith and tradition to freedom, to fairness, to social justice and equal opportunity. To tikkun olam, the obligation to repair this world." **[tinyurl.com/tikkun03]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

Jewish Life

The moral fitness to lead

Money Matters

By Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

Our sages, ever so perceptive of human nature, note that a person reveals his true self through his "pocket, his drink and his anger" ("*b'kiso, koso, kaaso*"). The sudden turn in the economy allow us to take stock of the connection between our financial challenges and our moral fortitude. The Talmud defines a Jew as one who is merciful, self-effacing and benevolent. That these traits still permeate our community can be seen by the many who have stepped forward to fill charity voids left by others.

However, evidence of the moral malaise that is at the root of the economic crisis abounds. How sad to read how the former CEO of Merrill Lynch John Thain gave early authorization to the payment of bonuses totalling $4 billion (US) just before his firm was acquired by Bank of America.

Why a company that lost upwards of $15 billon in the quarter was paying any bonuses (and doing so in an underhanded fashion) is a question that should leave us morally shaken. But Bank of America appears to be a good partner for Merrill, possessing as it does a similar corporate culture. ABC News reported that the bank, which has happily accepted billions in federal taxpayer bailout dollars, spent more than $10 million sponsoring a Super Bowl party.

The list of such obscene corporate expenditures seems never-ending. While there are always those ready to explain the necessity of such spending, and some of the points may even have some validity, the overall environment is one of personal entitlement with little regard for the consequences or the context of such spending. Such lack of broader context helps explain the ever-widening salary gaps between top-level executives and the average worker on the job. While once again, such a gap can be explained by market forces, which in of themselves are not immoral, the overall impact of such increasingly wide discrepancies are unhealthy for all.

Our tradition has long recognized that our actions may be technically legal, yet morally deficient. In many a case, the hands of the court are powerless to act against those who are "exempt from the laws of man, yet liable in the eyes of Heaven." The aggressiveness of the financial industry in granting credit where it should not have is just one of many current examples of this idea.

Such moral failings of the corporate world, while regrettable, are not surprising. They're a manifestation of the rabbinic teachings that "jealousy, lust and honour drive a person from this world." It is thus up to the government and regulators to try to enact legislation to attempt to close the gap between the legal and the ethical.

Unfortunately, the prognosis is not promising.

Judaism has always demanded that only those who have the best interests of the community at heart, even at personal loss, are fit for leadership. Enacting legislation whose main goal is to help those in power to get re-elected doesn't qualify. Whatever one may think of the most recent Canadian budget, almost all analysts see it as serving political rather than economic ends.

Much more frightening is the current wave of protectionism coming out of Washington. It's hard to fathom (actually, maybe it's not so hard) why the leaders of the free world would want to enact legislation similar to that which helped cause the Great Depression. When leaders want to be seen as doing something and pander to the masses, whose grasp of economic theory is next to non-existent, long-term thinking is neglected with potentially dire consequences. Let us pray that our leaders rise to the challenges before them.

Send comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

Finally, a leader to look up to

Ideas on Identity

By Rabbi Elyse Goldstein

I'm in love, and just in time for Valentine's Day. (Yes, I know. Valentine's Day isn't a Jewish holiday. That's for another column some time.) I am infatuated with Barack and Michelle Obama. I simply love the American first couple.

Don't worry. This isn't a crush or romantic love. And it's not a rose-coloured- glasses, political kind of love. I'm not sure how Obama's first 100 days as U.S. president will go. I'm not sure if all his appointments have been good ones. I certainly didn't love Pastor Rick Warren's evangelical invocation at the inauguration. His appropriating, triumphalist use of the Hebrew name of Jesus left me hopping mad and practically spoiled the whole inauguration for me.

I know that Obama faces a long, slogging road, and that he's just a man.

What I am in love with is the idea of Obama, the image of Obama. I love that my kids are growing up with a real "American hero," that other than rock stars and sports figures (often fallen sports figures, and questionably talented drug-using rock stars, unfortunately), today's young people now have a politician they can actually look up to.

If you had asked any preteen kid last year for a list of their heroes, I doubt that any world leader, from any country at all, would have topped the list. (Can most 12-year-olds even name their MP, MPP, MLA or MNA? Their provincial premier? The prime minister even? Try Disney's most recently invented rock group and you may do better.)

Recent scandals in the Israeli government revealed behaviour and attitudes that I certainly wouldn't want my kids to emulate. Canadian politicians are slightly ahead in this area, I admit proudly. But mostly we roll our eyes or even laugh at the foibles of elected officials. Occasionally, we're downright embarrassed by them.

And yes, I know Obama occasionally smokes. (Oy, Barack! Quit it already.) But what I see when I turn on the TV is an articulate, calm, dedicated leader with commitment, vision, open-mindedness, zeal, perseverance and a lovely family to whom he is loyal and caring, at least so far.

He seems to be an old-fashioned family man. He seems to really love and enjoy his family. I enjoy watching him with them. They seem downright wholesome. (Oy, Barack! Don't make a mistake on this one. Don't make me eat my words some day.)

Maybe I am naive, but I just don't get how people in the public eye – teachers, politicians and rabbis, too – can ever consider any behaviour that would jeopardize the faith the public has put in them.

The mantle of leadership may be heavy, but you choose to wear it.

My guess is that Obama understands this better than many politicians who have come before him. My guess is that as the first black president, he feels that the world is watching, and waiting for a fatal misstep.

He feels the weight of that mantle, and he doesn't dismiss it for a moment. So far.

OK, so far I'm in love.

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Globe story sets record straight on incident in Gaza

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Patrick Martin's Jan. 29 Globe and Mail report, "Account of Israeli attack doesn't hold up to scrutiny," has attracted a lot of attention, because it reveals what journalism does at its best when it investigates and establishes the truth.

Martin wrote: "Most people remember the headlines: Massacre Of Innocents As UN School Is Shelled; Israeli Strike Kills Dozens At UN School." But "[t]here was just one problem: The story, as etched in people's minds, was not quite accurate."

Martin visited the school and determined, by examining the physical evidence and interviewing eyewitnesses, that reports of Israel striking it on Jan. 6 were wrong.

Martin wrote: "While a few people were injured from shrapnel landing inside the white-and-blue-walled UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency] compound, no one in the compound was killed. The 43 people who died in the incident were all outside, on the street, where all three mortar shells landed."

However, not all reports at the time of the tragic incident got it wrong.

In fact, on Jan. 6, the United Nations news service published a statement acknowledging that, according to John Ging, UNRWA's director of operations in Gaza, "three [Israeli] artillery shells landed at the perimeter of a school."

Confusion ensued when, in the same statement, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, apparently ignoring or unaware of Ging's evaluation, condemned Israel's attack on the school.

Media outlets that, it seems, paid attention to Ging's account got the story right from the start. For example, on CBC's the National (Jan. 6) anchor Peter Mansbridge said that Israeli shells exploded "by" the school, not on it.

Similarly, on Jan. 6, Global TV News reporter Lauren McNabb said that Israeli tank shells exploded "outside" the UN school. However, viewers might well have been confused by anchor Kevin Newman's introductory remark that the school "has been bombed by Israeli forces."

The National Post got it wrong by relying on a Reuters news service story, "Israel Defends Shelling Schools; Accuses Hamas of using civilians as 'bulletproof vests,'" (Jan. 7). Reporting that three UN-run schools were hit by Israeli fire, Reuters was apparently relying on an initial Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) statement that it had responded to Hamas' fire from inside the school. (It was later determined that Hamas fired from near the school.)

In "Israelis hit school, Ottawa blames Hamas" (Toronto Star, Jan. 7) Oakland Ross wrote that "at least 42 Palestinians – including children – were killed by Israeli tank fire while taking shelter in a UN-operated school."

Ross, too, relied on the initial Israeli report that said Hamas had fired from the school, and also on a statement from Foreign Affairs Minister Peter Kent implying that the school had been struck, but blaming Hamas.

Adding to the confusion, on Jan. 7 the Toronto Star also ran a piece by Associated Press reporters Ibrahim Barzak and Jason Keyser. The headline – "'There's nowhere safe in Gaza'; 42 dead, dozens injured as Israeli mortar shells explode near UN school in teeming refugee camp" – indicated that the Israeli shells did not hit the school itself.

Apparently relying on both Ban Ki-Moon's statement and the initial IDF explanation, even Patrick Martin, in his initial Globe and Mail story on the event ("Israeli strike kills dozens at UN school," Jan. 7) reported that the Israeli attack was "on" the school.

Thus Martin's Jan. 29 story corrects many previous reports – including his own. Significantly, it started the ball rolling toward a correct, consistent, accounting of the events by the United Nations.

In a Feb. 2 Ha'aretz article, "UN backtracks on claim that deadly IDF strike hit Gaza school," Amos Harel, referring to Martin's report, wrote: "The United Nations has reversed its stance on one of the most contentious and bloody incidents of the recent Israel Defense Forces operation in Gaza, saying that an IDF mortar strike that killed 43 people on Jan. 6 did not hit one of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency schools after all."

Harel quoted Maxwell Gaylord, the UN humanitarian coordinator in Jerusalem, who said that the UN "would like to clarify that the shelling and all of the fatalities took place outside, and not inside, the school."

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Coast to Coast

Homeless enjoy kosher meal at shul

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — Although only a handful of this city's homeless population is Jewish, they were given an opportunity to come in from the cold on a recent winter day and enjoy a warm and delicious kosher lunch.

In fact, several hundred homeless people were invited to join them, whether they needed, wanted or even understood the meaning of kosher food.

Jewish Family Services of Ottawa (JFS) spearheaded an event that was a lesson in community co-operation, multicultural understanding and goodwill. Teaming up with several churches and community organizations that work with the homeless, JFS arranged for the kosher meal to be served at Congregation Beth Shalom synagogue in downtown Ottawa.

David Smith, owner of Creative Kosher Caterers, volunteered to prepare the Jan. 26 meal with food donated by local businesses.

"This time of year, after Christmas, can be a rather isolating time of year for the homeless," said Mark Zarecki, executive director of JFS.

"For us, this is an example of tikkun olam… whenever I have been on the streets [with JFS' Street Smarts program], there are 10 to 12 Jews or Muslims who want kosher or halal food."

Once the planning started, word spread and volunteers began to call, but so many came forward that some had to be turned away.

Angela Campbell, director of fundraising at the Shepherds of Good Hope, a Christian organization that helps the poor, was on the organizing committee.

"It's like linking arms, a community effort," she said. "I was amazed at how this effort got so many volunteers."

The sentiment was shared by JFS president Jack Shinder, who noted that many people took a day off work in the middle of the week to serve meals.

"The event somehow touched the volunteer base in a way that is somewhat unique," he said.

Volunteer Linda Rossman was one of those who answered the call.

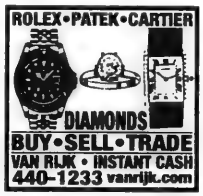
"I would do it again next year. I wish I could do more," she said.

When all was said and done, some 200 meals were served – only about half the number that was anticipated. Part of the reason was a lack of public transportation due to a two-month-old transit strike, making it difficult for people to get to the synagogue. In a gesture of goodwill, several striking bus drivers volunteered to drive homeless people to and from the event.

Jane Scharf said she thoroughly enjoyed her meal of soup, salad, kafta, potato and dessert. She and two friends had high praise for the effort.

"I am happy that this community respects the poor enough to put on an event like this. This is a community that is very important to me. It is a population of people that needs a lot more attention… Everyone was treated with respect and dignity," Scharf said.

Zarecki said he hopes that the kosher meal for the homeless can become an annual event.



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ייִדיש־ווינקל

רעדאַגירט פֿון: אַלעק סילווער

א. מ. קליין — צו זיין הונדערטסטן געבוירן־יאָר

פֿון שמחה סימכאָוויטש (מאָראַנטאָ)

הײַנט־יאָר פֿאַלט אויס דאָס 100סטע געבוירן־יאָר פֿון אײנעם פֿון די סאַמע פֿאָרמײַנעדיקסטע ייִדיש־קאַנאַדישע דיכטער — אברהם משה קליין.

געבוירן אין 1909 אין ראָסנא, אוקראַינע, איז ער אָנגעקומען מיט זײַנע עלטערן קיין מאָנטרעאל אין עלטער פֿון אײַן יאָר. די עלטערן זײַנען געווען פֿרומע מענטשן און זיי האָבן דעם יונגן אברהם משה געשיקט לערנען אין דער מאָנטרעאָלער תּלמוד־תּורה און שפּעטער בײַ פֿרײַוואָטע מלמדים. אין דער זעלבער צײַט האָט קליין נעלערנט אין דער שטאָטישער מיטלשול און דערנאָך אין מאָנטרעאָלער מעקגיל אוניווערסיטעט. אין עלטער פֿון 24 יאָר האָט ער גראַדוירט פֿון יורי־פּאַקולטעט און נעוואָרן אַן אַדוואָקאַט.

אברהם משה קליין איז נעווען כּל־ימיו אַרײַנגעטאָן אין ייִדיש־געזעלשאַפֿטלעכן לעבן. ער איז געווען אַקטיוו אין „בני־ברית" און אין ציוניסטישן אַרבעטער־פֿאַרבאַנד, רעדאַקטאָר פֿון „קנעדיגן דזשוּיש קראָניקל" אין די יאָרן 1939–1955, ווי אויך רעדאַקטאָר שרײַבער פֿאַרן מאָנטרעאָלער מאַגאַזין און כּלל־טוער סעמגעל בראַנפֿמאַן.

אַבער קליינס אמתע גרויסקייט זײַנען געווען זײַנע פּענאַמענאָלע דערגרייכונגען אויפֿן ליטעראַרישן געביט. זײַנע פֿאָעטישע שאַפֿונגען זײַנען איינגעזאַמלט געוואָרן אין די ביכער: „האָט ניט א ייִד" (נידיאַרק, 1940), „די היטלעריאַדע" (נידיאַרק, 1944), „פֿאָעמעס" (פֿילאַדעלפֿיע, 1944) און „די וודיגשטול" (טאָראָנטאָ, 1948). אָט די לידער־ביכער האָבן א. מ. קליינען אוועקגעשטעלט ביים מזרח־וואַנט פֿון זײַנ־צייטיקער ענגלישער דיכטונג, אין איין ריי מיט אַוועלכע ערשטראַנגיקער ענגליש־אַמעריקאַנער פֿאָעטן ווי ט. ס. עליאָט, עזרא פּאַונד און דער אירלענדישער שרײַבער דזשעימס דזשויס. קליינס דעוויז איז נעווען דעם ייִדישן לידיקער ריינער מאַריא ריילקעס (1875–1926) זאַג, אַז דער עצם פֿון דיכטונג איז האָס אויפֿלעבן פֿון פֿאָעטס קינדער־ און יונגט־יאָרן.

אין ליכט פֿון דעם שרײַבט א. מ. קליין: „פֿאַר מיר האָט עס נעמיינט צוריק אויפֿלעבן די נאָסטאַלגיע און שיינקייט פֿון מײַן קינדהייט, וואָס איז נעווען אַ ייִדישער רעזענדיקע און אַ העברעיש־טראַכטענדיקע; מתּנגדיש דורך מײַנע לערער און חסידיש דורך מײַן טאַטן. „די טעאָלאָגיע, מען איך זאָגן, האָט זיך אויסגעוועפט, אָבער די טראַדיציע איז געבליבן".

אין זײַן ליד „געגנאַלאָגיע" שרײַבט ער:

ניט אַלײַן בין איך געבוירן, נאָר אַ פּולער בראשית
פֿאַר די אָבות, וואָס האָבן מיך געפּאַטערט.
דער גוף מיינער איז אַ ווונדער. קערפּערלעך
וווּנען זיי אין מיינע אָדערן,
זיי אַנטערהערן מיין אויער,
זיי קרײַזן ווי מיט תּורהס אָרעם מיין שאָרבן,
אַריין אין אָדויס, זיי עפענען טאָג־טעגלעך
די רוקבלעטלעך פון מיין הארץ, נידערן און שטיגן
— אין ס'קוקן זוכות דורך מיינע אויגן.

(מיין אינערעמנט)

וועג ס'איז אַריסגעקומען אין 1940 קליינס ערשטע לידער־זאַמלונג האָט שמואל ניגער דיך אָפּגערופֿן קריטיס, טענהדיק, אַז קליינס ענגליש איז צו סאָפֿיסטיצירט פֿאַר דורכשניטלעכן ייִדיש־ענגלישן לייענער און אין דער זעלבער צייט זײַנען זײַנע לידער צו פּיל ייִדיש פֿאַר דעם ניט־ייִדישן לייענער.

(סוף אין קומענדיקן „וויקל")

On cjnews.com this week

- ***JUMP (Jewish Urban Meeting Place) celebrates its one-year anniversary - see online video***

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Coast to Coast

Senator 'dismayed' over jailed Hamas legislators

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Liberal Senator Sharon Carstairs recently voiced concerns about Hamas parliamentarians who are in prison in Israel. They were arrested shortly after being elected in 2006.

Carstairs expressed her views on CBC Radio on Jan. 25.

In a telephone interview, Carstairs, who is chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) committee of human rights of parliamentarians, said that after the elections in the West Bank and Gaza in 2006, 34 Hamas members "who were duly elected" were "taken to Israel," some "as early as April 2006."

> ***'If they are guilty of terrorist acts, they should be charged'***

Carstairs said that most of the parliamentarians "have never been charged or tried." She said that "if they are guilty of terrorist acts, they should be charged and prosecuted, but up to this point most of them haven't been brought to trial."

Carstairs said that as chair of the IPU Committee, she has an obligation to raise this issue. She said that according to the IPU, there are more than 300 parliamentarians in 29 countries in these types of situations.

Carstairs added that "Israel supported the elections in 2006, and they said these [people] will be duly elected parliamentarian."

Carstairs also noted "two of these individuals [elected Hamas members] were charged and tried and convicted, but the only charge was that they belonged to Hamas," which Carstairs said wasn't a proper charge, and she is "dismayed" by the handling of these cases.

Carstairs said it's "fair to say that because Fatah is in charge of the Palestinian Authority [in the West Bank], their original demands for the release of [Hamas parliamentarians] have been lessened to some degree." This, she said, is because "Fatah and Hamas are rivals."

Carstairs emphasized that the issue she has raised has "nothing to do" with Israel's recent military operation in Gaza.

"My view is that Israel is entitled to have a secure border and security for its people. Although none of us like what's happened in Gaza, Israel has a right to defend herself," Carstairs said.

On Feb. 4, Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Canada-Israel Committee, issued a response to Carstairs' concerns about the Hamas parliamentarians. "The Hamas-affiliated individuals currently detained in Israel who are the subject of Senator Carstairs' concern… are believed to be connected to various terrorist activities. Their parliamentary association does not render them immune to detention or prosecution by Israel for their alleged roles in terrorist plots," Fogel said.

"Some have been released by Israel (e.g., Hassam Khader) as a goodwill gesture to PA President Mahmoud Abbas, and all benefit from treatment that is in full accord with Israeli and international law."

Fogel added that the CIC "understands the desire on the part of Canadian parliamentarians to advocate for the safety of all democratically elected lawmakers. However, we regret that Senator Carstairs… did not reach out to the CIC or the Israeli Embassy before offering any comment, despite efforts by the embassy to contact her."

Carstairs said that she tried to contact the Israeli ambassador before raising her concerns. "I have been asking to meet with the Israeli ambassador for over a year and a half," she said.

Since The CJN's interview with Carstairs, a meeting was set up. Carstairs is to speak with Israeli Ambassador Miriam Ziv on Feb. 26.

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English teachers needed in Israel

Compiled by CJN Staff

A screening day will be held Feb. 26 for a program being launched to help 50 new olim become English teachers in Israel.

Sponsored by the Jewish Agency for Israel, Israel's Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, and Nefesh B'Nefesh, the program provides a supportive framework for young immigrants to acquire a profession and to help meet the growing demand for qualified English teachers in Israel.

Those eligible include singles or married couples who hold bachelor's degrees in any field or discipline and are eligible to make aliyah. Once selected, olim receive housing at the Jerusalem Beit Canada or Raanana absorption centres and go on to get a teacher's certificate for elementary and high school at the David Yellin College in Jerusalem or the Lewinsky College in the greater Tel Aviv area.

The 14-month training period includes Hebrew ulpan, teacher training and a paid internship. Newly certified teachers will be offered positions in schools according to local needs and within the official pay scale for new teachers.

The program includes an absorption basket of approximately 1,500 shekels per month, a living stipend and free tuition.

To learn more, call 416-633-4766, ext. 4, or e-mail aliyahto@jafi.org.il.

Film fest drops prize sponsored by Jewish group

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — After one of its jurors resigned in protest last year, a long-established Quebec film festival dropped a prize created and sponsored by the Jewish community intended to promote tolerance because festival organizers feel it's inappropriate to be associated with any "political pressure" group.

Les Rendez-vous du Cinéma Québécois, whose 27th edition opens Feb. 18, will not be presenting the $5,000 Alex and Ruth Dworkin Prize, which since 2006 had been awarded to a film that contributes to understanding among different people.

The prize became a source of controversy last year when one of the festival's three jurors, Malcolm Guy, resigned because of the purported rigidly pro-Israel stance of Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), which helped conceive the award, and the Dworkins' support of the Jewish National Fund (JNF).

The Dworkin Foundation is administered by the Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal (JCF), and the prize was launched by Rendez-vous in collaboration with CJC.

Rendez-vous executive director Ségolène Roederer said in an interview with The CJN that the festival's board decided to eliminate the prize because the festival "couldn't prove that the foundation was not really involved with CJC."

The festival was never able to get a satisfactory answer as to what the link between the foundation and CJC was, so the prize was eliminated, she said.

The decision was made well before the launch of Israel's operation in Gaza, she added.

"The Rendez-vous cannot have relations with any lobby or pressure group, or any political or religious organization of any kind. It is not appropriate," Roederer said.

The festival's board regards CJC as such a lobby group, she said, adding that whether it is pro-Israel or not isn't the issue.

"We really gave this a lot of thought. It was a process," she continued.

The link between the prize and CJC, however, has always been clear. The establishment of the prize was announced at a press conference launching the 2006 Rendez-vous festival.

CJC issued a press release stating that the annual prize had been conceived by CJC in co-operation with Rendez-vous, a showcase of new, locally made films.

At the time, CJC said it hoped that the collaboration would foster a positive partnership between the Jewish and francophone communities in Quebec.

Roederer acknowledged that CJC's involvement from the outset was known, and regrets that the festival did not look more deeply into what it was getting into.

"We did not do our job fully… I think we were a little too quick [to get involved]," she said.

Guy's resignation, however, brought the issue to the fore, she said. "He made some accusations that we were never able to find out if they were true or not." However, sufficient doubt was raised to end the relationship.

Guy, a Montreal film director and producer, wrote in a widely circulated open letter that, after looking more closely into the background of the prize's sponsors, he did not want his name associated with it. He said the money was "tainted" and urged Rendez-vous not to accept it.

He called CJC "a vehicle for the Israeli propaganda machine," denounced JNF, which the Dworkins supported, for "the massive displacement of the Palestinian people and the occupation of their land" and protested the Israeli "siege" of Gaza.

Guy is not associated with this year's festival.

The whole affair has left JCF executive director Robert Kleinman deeply disillusioned, given that the prize was created in good faith to foster dialogue and that its demise was provoked by what he sees as a misrepresentation of the facts. "I can't say Guy lied, but he put together facts in order to make us believe in a lie."

Kleinman also has a different version of events.

He said he asked for a meeting with the board to deal with Guy's charges, but was not granted one, yet he was assured by the president that the prize was secure.

Several months ago, the festival's directors informed Kleinman that the prize was being abolished. He again requested a meeting with the board to discuss the matter in full and to plead for the retention of the prize. But that was never granted, either, he said.

"I personally feel a great sense of disappointment and injustice," Kleinman said. Guy's letter was, Kleinman wrote at the time, "totally gratuitous and unfounded."

For one thing, CJC does not speak on issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he said.

The Dworkin film prize was created in the aftermath of the violent protest against the appearance of former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu at Concordia University in 2002. The Dworkin family wanted to contribute in some way to restoring a better climate in the city.

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Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator for 26 years

Question: Could you please advise me what I should do to protect myself from being liable in the future for the debts incurred by my spouse on his credit cards (they are held in his name only). We jointly own a home and I am wondering if the companies would take the house over if the payments could not be made. I am planning a separation.

Answer: If your name is not on your spouse's credit cards you are not normally legally liable for any debts incurred. There are still some credit card companies or collection agencies that use old common law principles that if a wife charges "necessities of life" such as food, clothing or shelter on a credit card that is solely in her name, then her husband has a responsibility under "common law" to pay those debts — not as a matter of contract law, but as a law arising from their marriage.

Recently, certain creative agents from creditors have tried to extend this old common law principle to include anything and everything, including family vacations, haircuts and CD's. However, the courts are becoming less patient with this old common law principle. Although you may not have a direct obligation to the debt, you could still end up paying for half if the credit card company sues your husband successfully and hubby still fails to pay. The creditor could then file the judgment against your jointly owned home. When you attempt to refinance or sell the home, that judgment is enforced and bingo, you have now paid half of your husband's debt from your share of the sale proceeds.

If you separate you could sue your husband for your loss, but that costs money. To prevent any of this you could have the house transferred solely into your name. But you can only safely do so five years before he is sued. Otherwise, you and your husband could be sued for a "fraudulent conveyance." Then the transfer of the home into your name could be reversed by the court on the request of the creditor.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Jam-packed JUMP fundraiser attracts eclectic group

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

It's been just one year since the Jewish Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) opened its doors to Jewish students and young professionals seeking a venue to meet, mingle and network, and the JUMP staff and members celebrated in style.

On Jan. 31, 500 people who have been touched by JUMP in some way trudged through the snow to eat, drink and party at Steam Whistle Brewing.

The event, which was held to raise money for the non-profit organization that offers subsidized trips to Israel and weekly programs at the Thornhill centre, featured a DJ and live entertainment, including performances from a percussionist and a breakdancing troupe.

The evening also featured a silent auction with prizes, among them two round-trip tickets to Israel, jewelry, tickets to sporting events, spa packages, gift certificates, original artwork and more.

"What is unique is that some of the products were going for money and some of the products were going for volunteer hours, but every single thing in the auction has at least one volunteer hour attached to it," said Debbie Osiel, JUMP's 28-year-old managing director.

Osiel, who has been working tirelessly on making the centre available to as many Jewish young professionals in the Greater Toronto Area as possible, said that the demand has exceeded her expectations on how many people she thought she would reach in one year.

Today, JUMP boasts 1,700 members, and runs two to three programs a week at the centre.

"Clearly, the demand is pushing us to create more initiatives, more programs more trips, and more volunteer opportunities," Osiel said.

"We are continuously coming up with new programs, so for us, it isn't enough that a program is doing well. Although we love it, we always have to come up with new ideas. Even if something is working, we are still trying to continuously improve it."

Debbie Osiel and Shlomo Buzaglo at JUMP's one-year anniversary party at Steam Whistle Brewing.

She said that while the JUMP staff – including Shlomo Buzaglo, the trips and outreach manager, and Shoshana Allen, the program manager – try to create programs that appeal to anyone, they also work to keep it fresh to keep members coming back.

"We listen to what people want. People tell us that the reason they love coming – besides the fact that they can just come to the centre, come to the kitchen, open the fridge, take off their shoes and make themselves a coffee – is that we actually listen to what people want. We create on demand," Osiel said.

She said that one of the most popular programs JUMP runs is the Dinner and Discussion program, which attracts about 60 people each week.

Sheri Becker, a JUMP member, said one of her favourite programs is Dinner and Discussion because she loves the idea of learning new things and meeting new people.

"When I go, I don't know anyone there because there are always new faces and you can tell that the people feel at home there. The environment is really welcoming, and the speakers are always knowledgeable," she said.

Becker, who worked on the committee to spread the word about the JUMP fundraiser, was thrilled with the success of the event.

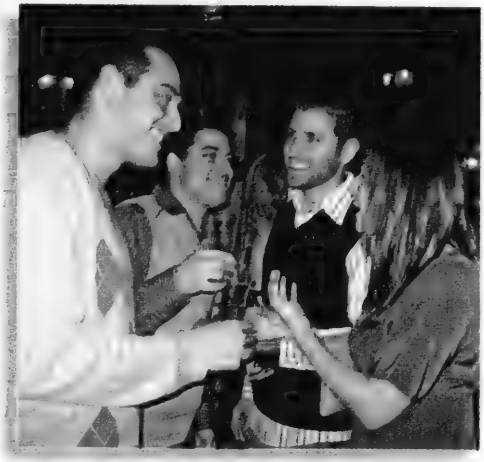
"Everyone from outgoing to shy people could go out to the same party and feel like they were a part of a community," she said.

"I think the party was such a success. It was really an eclectic group of people. For me, it exceeded my goals. I didn't think that many people would be there, but it was jam-packed. I loved the venue. It wasn't religious, but there was still a Jewish feel about it. It was really welcoming, and JUMP staff were always around, so you knew who was behind it."

Becker said she is also impressed with JUMP as an organization that works to keep Jewish youths feeling like a part of the community.

"For people, who don't have a place to go or don't have a social network, it has opened a whole new door. People have found a new family, new friends, and every Shabbat, if their families aren't observant, they know that they can go for Shabbat dinner at JUMP and it is always an open-door policy."

Osiel said if the organization had more more funding, she would love to be able to open JUMP centres in downtown Toronto and other cities in North America.



Jewish young professionals share a laugh while schmoozing at the Jewish Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) event.

"I was always brought up with a sense of community, but to be able to translate it into a passion for community building and for connecting with human beings within our culture and to be able to share how beautiful Judaism is, and to be able to share my passion of our culture keeps me inspired to keep doing more and more," Osiel said.

She said it is sometimes difficult to sell their cause to donors because there are so many others around the world who are in need, but she believes in the importance of strengthening the Jewish community.

"What we're doing is really standing up for the future generations."

JUMPers cut loose on the dance floor as a percussionist performed his set.

Health & Lifestyles

Fundraiser helps kids fight cancer

By LEILA SPEISMAN
Staff Reporter

Evan Erlick was only 13 when he lost his battle with brain cancer in December 2006.

During his nearly two-year ordeal, he had two dreams – that cancer could be eradicated, and that children having cancer treatments at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children could have someplace where they would be able to play games, relax and, for a little while, just be kids.

A fundraiser to help bring his dreams to fruition will be held Feb. 25 at Tryst Nightclub, 82 Peter St., at 7:30. In a Cuban atmosphere, Hot Havana Nights will feature signature cocktails, an open bar, hors d'oeuvres, live and silent auctions, live entertainment, a DJ and a dancer. The 500 participants will celebrate "in spicy salsa or cool cocktail attire," SickKids organizer Jaime Wilson said.

Proceeds will be shared between SickKids, for the special room, and the Israel Cancer Research Fund (ICRF), which sponsors cancer research in Israel. Wilson said that construction of the new waiting room at SickKids will begin later this month.

It is hoped that Evan's dream will be an annual affair, Wilson said. "Last year's event, the first, Funky Black & White Masquerade, was held at This is London Nightclub. It raised over $300,000."

Evan's mother, Lisa Erlick, described her late son as "feisty, a typical kid, who got into trouble."

He showed the same qualities as a cancer patient, she said. "He was a real trooper, coping with many surgeries, radiation and chemotherapy."

The idea for a kids' playroom came when Evan watched children waiting for blood test results, treatments or consultations.

"He felt that they should have somewhere that they could, for a little while, just have fun as kids," Erlick said.

The new room will be "bright and airy, with games, stickies and all kinds of things," she added.

Joy Wagner Arbus, executive director of ICRF, said that its portion of the proceeds will go to fund research that the organization's scientific review panel considers to have the most potential to save lives.

The partnership between SickKids and the ICRF has not just been successful, she said. "but our causes are synergistic. We both hope to save lives of kids like Evan.

"The room will give a better experience for kids undergoing a terrible experience," Wagner Arbus added.

Erlick said services and fundraising are affected by the current recession. "There are long lineups for chemotherapy, which makes it hard for everyone. Cancer isn't affected by a recession."

An emotional Erlick, who has been involved with ICRF for a long time, said, "If the kids go through so much, this project is the least I can do."

Tickets, at $180 per person, are available online at www.icrftoronto.org or www.sickkidsleaders.com/evan, or by telephone at 416-440-7781.

HELPING OUT: Mikayla Wolfe 6 and her brother Jordan, 3, recently met with Jennifer McWilliam, manager of community development and donor relations at Bloorview Kids Rehab, to donate a portion of their birthday gifts from this past year to the hospital. McWilliam took them on a tour of the building, introducing them to the children there and showing them the different areas they use, such as the the library, classrooms, pool and gym.

FAMILY MOMENTS

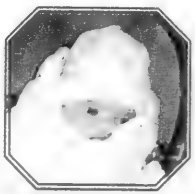
Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Alexa, 3, and Justin, 1, children of Samuel & Kimberly Grief of Chicago, and grandchildren of Eleanor & Sydney Pomerantz and Eileen & Stuart Eisenberg.

Happy 90th birthday to Eddie Freid, with lots of love from your family.

onlysimchas!
Celebrating Jewish Life



Mazel tov on the recent birth of Daliya Mushiyev.

Mazel tov on the graduation of Ahuva Dusowitz.

Mazel tov on the wedding of Sruly Hecht & Shaindy Ackerman.

Mazel tov on the recent marriage of Aaron Samole & Sarah Shainhouse.

Mazel tov on the recent birth of Talia Sara Gisser.

Mazel tov to Malki (Mochkin) & Nochum Labkowskin on the birth of a baby boy.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Label the back of all photos and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. Send all your photos to:
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What's New

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What's New deadlines: Thursday, Feb. 12, is the deadline for the Feb. 26 issue and Monday, Feb. 23, is the deadline for the March 5 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com. Please note: incorrect deadlines appeared in last week's column.

Thursday, Feb. 12

COMPARATIVE JUDAISM

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism continues a "Comparative Judaism Series" with **Rabbi Eva Goldfinger**. Tonight, "Reconstructionist, Renewal and Trans-denominational and Post-Denominational Judaism." 7 p.m. $15. 18 Wynford Dr. RSVP, 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org.

JOSEPH AND ESTHER

Rachel Adelman, of MaTaN, Jerusalem, speaks on "Sceptres, Signet Rings and Masks: Joseph and Esther in the Imperial Court," exploring parallel stories and roles of Joseph and Esther in the courts of foreign palaces. Thursday, 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. 416-789-3213

Saturday, Feb. 14

PARSHAH DISCUSSION

Murray Urowitz will talk about the weekly portion, Yitro, 9:30 a.m. at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. 416-221-3433

GIFT OF GRATEFULNESS

Beth Tzedec Congregation presents **Rabbi Henry Glazer**, of the Fair Lawn Jewish Centre, in a day on The Gift of Gratefulness. He will speak in a pulpit lecture during 8:45 a.m. services on "If You Had To Choose One Commandment…" and in a lecture following service on "From Griping to Gratefulness: A Jewish Historical Perspective and the Spiritual Challenge for Today." Finally, during seudah shlishit, service starts at 5 p.m., "I Am, Therefore I Thank: A Study of *Modeh Ani*." 416-781-3511

LODZER DANCE

The Lodzer Centre Congregation hosts a dance with Go Freddy Go playing music of the 1950s and '60s. 8 p.m. $25. Tickets, 416-636-6665

Sunday, Feb. 15

YU KOLLEL YOM RISHON

Yeshiva University Kollel Yom Rishon Sunday scholars series begins today with **Dr. David Pelcovitz** on "Children and Trauma: Talking to Children About Loss and Terrorism in Israel" at BAYT. Breakfast 9 a.m. Lecture 9:30 a.m. 416-783-6960

LIMMUD TORONTO

A day of Jewish learning and culture at the Bahen Centre. Study Torah, liturgy, and Jewish history, go green with a panel on eco-Judaism, write your family memoir, sing along with an instant choir and much more. Free programs for children ages 5-12. Registration, www.limmud.ca or 647-838-7004.

HA SHOUK BAZAAR

Pride of Israel Synagogue holds a *Ha Shouk* bazaar, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. All new items, including jewelry, clothing, baby items, home décor and more. Free admission, door prizes. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

Tuesday, Feb. 17

TEA AND BOOKS

Enjoy a cup of tea and hear a library staff member talk about some of her favourite books about music. 2-3 p.m. at Barbara Frum Library. 416-395-5440

TUESDAYS FILM SERIES

Beth Tikvah Synagogue Tuesday afternoon movie series with **Larry Anklewicz** continues with the film, Crossing Delancy. 2 p.m. $5. 416-221-3433

BOOK REVIEW

The Adath Israel Book and Film Review series reviews The Gathering by **Ann Enright**. 8 p.m. with **Heather Kassel**. $10, non-members $15. 416-635-5340

Continued on page 23

Yeshiva University *presents* Kollel Yom Rishon - Sunday Scholars Series

Children & Trauma

Talking to Children About Loss and Terrorism in Israel

February 15th

Co-sponsored by
BAYT and B'nai Torah
613 Clark Avenue West

Dr. David Pelcovitz

Dr. Pelcovitz is a professor at Yeshiva University's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, and Assistant to the President. Serving for over two decades as Director of Psychology at North Shore University Hospital-NYU School of Medicine, and Clinical Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry, at NYU School of Medicine, he has consulted extensively with the Jewish community in the United States, Europe and Israel on a wide range of issues facing children and adolescents, and has published and lectured extensively on a variety of topics related to education, parenting and child mental health, including his most recent book, entitled "Balanced Parenting," which he wrote with his father.

9:00 am Breakfast & Registration
9:30am Lecture
10:30 am Questions & Answers

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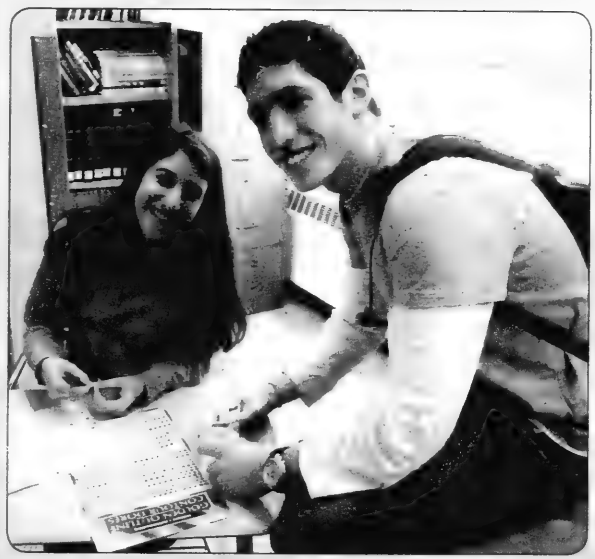

LETTERS TO SOLDIERS: Ilana Clark and Jordan Sloan, students at Forest Hill Collegiate, write letters to Israeli soldiers during a recent Jewish Student Union (JSU) club meeting. The JSU's mission is to get more Jewish teens attending public high schools to do Jewish things. JSU meetings take place during lunch hours, as well as before and after school. Programs include speakers from a variety of Jewish groups and discussions on timely topics.

Continued from page 22

MARRIAGE COURSE

Chabad Markham offers a six-week course for brides and grooms on marriage with **Rabbi Avraham** and **Rebbetzin Goldie Plotkin**. Tonight through March 31, 9 p.m. $120, non-members $180. 905-886-0420, ext. 221, or www.chabadmarkham.org

Wednesday, Feb. 18

WHAT'S A GOOD JEW?

Rabbi Philip Scheim begins a four-lecture series on Four Questions for Our Time. Wednesdays through March 11, 8 p.m. at Beth David Synagogue. Tonight, "What Does It Take To Be a Good Jew?" 416-633-5500

Other News

FUN WITHOUT THE SUN

Temple Har Zion's Sisterhood and membership committees host an evening of fun and friendship with games and lessons including Scrabble, Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, rummy Q, beading, using a digital camera, crocheting, golf putting, knitting, and creating a digital scrapbook. Thursday, Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. To register for lessons, e-mail harzionsisterhood08@gmail.com Include your name and the lesson you want.

KARAOKE NIGHT

Join Pride of Israel Synagogue for a professional Karaoke Night. Saturday, Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. $7, includes pizza, salad and dinner. RSVP by Feb. 18, 416-226-0111, ext. 0.

PRAYER: THE *AMIDAH*

Mekorot offers "Prayer: A Careful Reading of the *Amidah*," about the central prayer of Jewish liturgy with **Devorah Vale**. Tuesdays, 1:15-2:30 p.m. Feb. 24-March 24. Women only. Registration and location info at www.mekorot.ca or 416-877-2050.

FUNDRAISING SKI DAY

The Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation and State of Israel Bonds hold their annual ski day Wednesday, Feb. 25, at the Alpine Ski Club. Bus departs 7 a.m. Registration 9 a.m. Beginner and intermediate ski and snowboard lessons, ski races, gift bag, silent auction and raffle prizes. $136. Register, www.hospitalwithaheart.ca or 416-781-3584.

ADULT CAREGIVER GROUP

The Caring for Your Loved One group is an education/support group for adult children who are providing caregiving for a parent who has dementia and is living in the community. A six-week group, Feb. 25-April 1, 6-7:30 p.m. Facilitated by a social worker and occupational therapist. Free. Registration, **Elaine Kohn**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2998, or **Nira Rittenberg**, 416-785-2500, ext. 3587.

SURVIVAL SEMINAR

Jews For Judaism offers an opportunity to learn the differences between Judaism and Christianity and how to respond to those who challenge your faith. Six-week class. With **Rabbi Michael Skobac**. begins Wednesday, Feb. 25, 8 p.m. at Adath Israel Congregation. Free. Register, 416-789-0020.

THE DYBBUK

Teatron Theatre presents The Dybbuk starring **Howard Jerome** Feb. 25-March 8, at Leah Posluns Theatre. Tickets $22-$44, 416-781-5527 or www.teatrontheatre.com.

JACS CONFERENCE

JACS hosts "Judaism and Recovery Hand in Hand," a conference where Jews in recovery, with their family and friends, join in a weekend of spiritual growth, in a safe environment for Jews of all denominations. Feb. 27-March 1. Registration and info, 416-638-0350, ext. 221, or www.jacstoronto.org.

JWI DIVA DAY

Jewish Women International Canada hosts Diva Day on March 1, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. The day includes a spa with manicures, pedicures or massage, yoga, Pilates and salsa. Presentations by cookbook author **Rose Reisman** and work-life balance expert **Rosalie Moscoe**, and style tips from **Marla Szellos**. Breakfast, lunch, espresso bar, smoothie bar and more. $125. Pre-registration required. JWIC is dedicated to ending violence against women. www.divaday.ca

1958 BARON BYNG REUNION

The 1958 graduating class of Baron Byng High School holds its 50th anniversary reunion on May 17 in Montreal. Contact **Eleanor Elkin Grief**, eketzele@videotron.ca.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Baycrest needs volunteers for its palliative care team to spend time with patients who are in their last stages of life and to provide emotional support and guidance to the patients and their families. All volunteers must complete a general orientation. Training begins in April. To register, call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 25

What's New

FOR SENIORS

Beth Tikvah Friendship Group hosts **Diana Mingail** presenting her latest DVD, From Abraham to Sadam, the story of the Jews of Iraq. Thursday, Feb. 12, 2-4 p.m. $5, non-members $7. All welcome.

Temple Sinai Social Club Lunch Programs presents "Armchair Travelling: The Volga River from Moscow to St. Petersburg" with **Corey Keeble**, curator at the Royal Ontario Museum. Wednesday, Feb. 18, 12:30 p.m. $5, non-members $7.

The Association of Jewish Seniors presents **Julius Ciss**, of Jews for Judaism, on "Confessions of a Former Jews for Jesus." Thursday, Feb. 19, 1:30 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. RSVP to Tammy, 416-635-2860.

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC, drop-in for recreation and socializing with current event discussion, gentle exercise to music, socializing over bagels, Scrabble, cards, bridge, chess. Thursday, Feb. 19, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155 or phyllisf@mnjcc.org.

Chai Shalom Social Club hosts Viva Las Vegas Cabaret with **Terry James**, Sunday, Feb. 22, 1:30 p.m. Beth Emeth and Chai Shalom members $6, guests $10. Reserve by Feb. 19, 416-633-3838.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Movie Day, Thursday, Feb. 19, 1:30 p.m.; Casino Rama, Wednesday, March 11.; Sunday dance, March 29; Also bridge, Lunch and Laughter, mah-jong, walking group, woodworking repair shop. All welcome. Call Tuesday-Thursday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112

"Broadway Musical and Jewish Composers" with **Morton Silverstone**. Mondays, Feb. 16 and 23, 1-2:30 p.m. $9, non-members $18.

The Community Care Access Centre at Bernard Betel helps seniors live longer in their homes. Wednesday, Feb. 18, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. 416-222-2241

Concert series, Thursday, Feb. 19, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Light refreshments. Free.

WAGMAN CENTRE

55 Ameer Ave. 416-785-2500

Mardi Gras party, Thursday, Feb. 19, 3-4 p.m. Sing and dance with The George Grosman Band, reserve by Feb. 13, at ext. 2267.

Book club facilitated by **Marilyn Fine** meets Thursday, Feb. 19, 1:30 p.m. Register, ext. 2267.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Register now for March Break Camp, March 16-20, and Passover Break Camp, April 6-17. Ext. 378 or centrecamp@bjcc.ca.

Thursday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m., join Conversation Café, a joint program with Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, offering newcomers to Canada a chance to practise English in a social environment. Information, 416-636-1880.

Youth ages 13-16 interested in learning about the Maccabi games contact **Grant**, gsmith@bjcc.ca or 416-636-1880, ext. 257.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org

"Customs, Traditions, Sacred Music and Superstitions of the Jews of India" with **Diana Mingail**, Sunday, Feb. 15, 2 p.m. $9, includes refreshments. Register, ext. 0 or jewishlife@mnjcc.org.

Toronto Jewish Film Society presents **I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!** with speaker, **Mark Clamen**. Sunday, Feb. 22, 4 and 7:30 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre. Ext. 606 or film@mnjcc.org.

"Mystics, Medics, and Merchants" paintings by **Myriam Nafte** in the Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space through March 8. Works for sale with a portion of proceeds to benefit the Downtown Jewish Community School.

DIRTY LEARNING: Maya and Josh, Grade 3 students at Netivot HaTorah Day School, investigate earthworms during a visit from Scientists in School for their presentation of "Soil: It's Too Important to be Treated like Dirt." [Rebecca Ansel photo]

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Josie Sidenberg	Jan 23/09	306 Finch Avenue, East
Sheldon Altman	Jan 23/09	65 Skymark Drive
Dorothy Arlove Schwartz	Jan 24/09	3560 Bathurst Street
Arthur Gryfe	Jan 23/09	14 Cartwheel Millway
Martin Rosenthal	Jan 24/09	645 Castlefield Avenue
Nina Ayzenberg	Jan 24/09	262 Ridley Blvd.
Jacob Goldgut	Jan 26/09	205 Cummer Avenue
Alex Rosen	Jan 24/09	4005 Bayview Avenue
Rhoda Silver	Jan 24/09	3636 Bathurst Street
Henry Gordon	Jan 24/09	343 Clark Avenue West
Cela Voinea	Jan 25/09	555 Cummer Avenue
Harvey Zarnett	Jan 25/09	1 Glen Park Avenue
Rae Weshler	Jan 25/09	541 Finch Avenue, West
David Risen	Jan 26/09	4001 Bayview Avenue
Reuben Shilling	Jan 26/09	7300 Yonge Street
Rita Stein	Jan 26/09	5444 Yonge Street
Michael Pesing	Jan 27/09	32 Clarissa Drive
Beulah Eckler	Jan 27/09	55 Prince Arthur Ave.
Mildred Cappel	Jan 27/09	1555 Finch Ave. East
Faye Mazer	Jan 27/09	111 Avenue Road
Harry Bentel	Jan 27/09	1925 Steeles Avenue, East
Gloria Kurtz	Jan 28/09	23 Addison Street
Bertha Swimmer	Jan 29/09	3 Dresden Road
Emile Harari	Jan 29/09	170 Red Maple Road
Gertrude (Gert) Sokoloff	Jan 28/09	10 Prue Avenue
Sydney Rosenblatt	Jan 31/09	6000 Bathurst St.
Carol Eisenberg	Jan 31/09	5 Kenneth Avenue

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Rozine, Mikhail	Jan. 28/09	Private
Gelman, Zinovi	Jan. 25/09	Private
Ginsberg, Benjamin	Jan. 25/09	3560 Bathurst St
Katz, Dora	Jan. 27/09	1121 Steeles Ave. W
Cohen, Isidore Victor	Jan. 26/09	10 Senlac Ave
Wiseman, Sylvia	Jan. 27/09	3560 Bathurst St
Kuchinsky, Zelda	Jan. 26/09	35 Canyon Ave
Bernath, Ruven	Jan. 27/09	3560 Bathurst St
Shore, Herschel	Jan. 25/09	1612 Juan De Fuca Bl
Birenboim, Margarita	Jan. 29/09	Private
Vale, Ruth	Jan. 29/09	718 Sheppard Ave. W
Albert, Jeffrey	Jan. 29/09	17 Summer Hill Rd
Gryfe, Ruth	Jan. 29/09	2 Covington Rd

HEDREW DASIC

Maurice Amar	Jan 29/09	1131 Steeles Ave W #106
Willie Levy	Jan 29/09	2395 Bayview Avenue
Marshall Kirsch	Feb 1/09	2915 Bathurst St

We would like to thank our family and friends for your kind expressions of sympathy, support and comfort at the recent passing of our beloved father and father in law

Rabbi Michel Spiro ז"ל

Your thoughtfulness will always be remembered.

Shayna & Lazer Friedman, Chomie & Zev Rosenzweig, Yechezkel & Shulamith Spiro

HENRY GORDON ז"ל
Passed away January 24, 2009
Survived by wife Zita, daughters Rita & Sandra and grandchildren Laura & Joey.
A devoted husband, great dad and grandfather.

Bierstock: Donald A.

It is with profound sadness that we mourn the passing of Donald Bierstock, who died at home on Wednesday, January 28th, 2009 with his family at his side. He was the best husband to Pamela, father to Jordana, Michael and Tracy, Zaida to Noah, Ryan, Alexa, Lauren and Joshua. Father-in-law to Ralph, Elisse and Andrew, and cousin and friend to those who were blessed to be part of his life. He made us proud every day.

Funeral services were held on Friday, January 30th at 1 p.m. from Beth Jacob Synagogue, 161 Stirling Ave. South in Kitchener, with Rabbi Yosil Rosenzweig officiating. Interment was at the Beth Jacob Cemetery in Kitchener located at the corner of Westmount and Victoria St. S. Shiva to follow at the home of Pam Bierstock commencing Saturday evening and ended Thursday morning Feb 5th. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the Donald Bierstock Fund for the Kitchener-Waterloo JCC, c/o Perry Romberg, UIA Federations Canada, 4600 Bathurst Street, Suite 315, Toronto, Ontario or at 416-636-7655 ext. 240.

To place an unveiling notice, please call at least 15 DAYS prior to the date of the unveiling.

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QUALITY MONUMENTS... FACTORY PRICES

Obituary

Gryfe matriarch co-founded bagel bakery

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Ruth Gryfe, who died late last month after a brief illness at age 92, will be remembered for her fierce loyalty to her family and for her determination to get done what she wanted done.

A founder of Gryfe's Bagel Bakery with her husband, Arthur, Gryfe worked side by side with him until he died in 1998.

Bernie Gryfe, Ruth's son, said his father had been a cake baker when his parents opened their business in 1956, but he had never baked a bagel.

"Someone came in, though, and requested bagels. Never saying 'no,' my mother took the order, and they spent the night experimenting. The rest is history."

He said his mother also helped found Ner Israel Yeshiva, an Orthodox high school for boys, in 1959, because she didn't want his brother to go away to Cincinnati, Ohio, to study.

An attempt had been made previously to get some students together, but it wasn't successful, Gryfe said. "My mother found students, and the school opened."

When he was preparing his eulogy, Gryfe said, he was told to keep humour to a minimum, "but it was very difficult. To me, my mother was the funniest woman in the world. She was a Lucille Ball without knowing it."

Relating one of the stories, he said that when his son was a youngster, he looked out the window and said, "'Bubbie, there's a cat outside.' She looked at it and said 'That's not a cat, it's a dog, and I've been feeding it for five years. I would never feed a cat, I hate cats.'

"I looked out and said, 'Mom, that's a cat.' After pondering the situation, her retort was 'You know, I always thought there was something fishy about that dog. I never heard it bark once in five years.'"

It's hard to remember his mother with sadness, he said, "because I can't remember any time she made me sad."

Barbara Gryfe Hakuk, Gryfe's daughter who now lives in Israel, said she's now a professional singer who got her start because her mother got her on the radio. "If she wanted something, she would not stop for anything."

She said that her mother's love for Yiddishkeit was unlimited. She was always grateful for everything and always said "Baruch HaShem."

She even taught her dedicated caregiver, Reine Abad, to say it, Gryfe Hakuk said.

Gryfe's grandson, Daniel, said that in his travels, he's always asked if Ruth Gryfe is his grandmother. "[I would hear the same story] time and time again. When they came into our store, they remember getting a piece of bagel from a nice, short, Jewish woman," he said in his eulogy.

"Yiddishkeit was my grandmother's essence. She prided herself on her affiliation with Ner Israel, and her family was her life. Each of her children had their special place in her heart."

Gryfe is survived by her daughter Barbara, sons Moishe and Bernie, as well as eight grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband, Arthur, and a son, Hershy.

On Campus

RCMP investigating two incidents at UBC

Continued from page 1

In both cases, it's alleged that the pro-Palestinian student ripped Star of David necklaces from the necks of the victims, police said.

But according to Daniel, the student involved in the first incident who asked that his last name not be printed, there are certain aspects of the police news release that aren't accurate.

Daniel told The CJN that he and three of his friends were walking through the residence, floor by floor, while video-recording a scavenger hunt.

"We made our way down a hallway and we saw a door with some anti-Israel posters on it – some with the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Hamas – which we found offensive," he said, adding that his friend decided to take them down.

Daniel said they heard someone moving in the dorm room, so they fled, but the pro-Palestinian student caught up with him.

"I was manhandled, scratched. I was grabbed, choked, put in a headlock. Basically, I'm pretty bruised up," Daniel said.

He added that although his attacker didn't hurl any anti-Semitic slurs at him during the altercation, "as soon as he saw my Star of David, he ripped it off."

Daniel said the RCMP news release was wrong to say that he was restrained by his attacker. Rather, he said he was being roughed up until the two resident advisers arrived to separate the two men.

He also denied making racist slurs against his attacker.

"Everything that I said to him was either a plea for my safety or asking him to consider the fact that he could get charged. There were no racial slurs at all. I did not negatively insult my attacker at all. I can guarantee you that if I did, I would be in a lot worse physical condition right now."

Daniel said that his roommate – the other Jewish student who was involved in a fight with the same pro-Palestinian student less than an hour later – "didn't do anything to provoke him or say anything during the attack."

Pat Johnson, managing director of Vancouver Hillel, said that the Jewish students involved in the second altercation were also participating in the same scavenger hunt and they were in the vicinity of the dorm room by chance.

"These students are not people who go looking for trouble," Johnson said.

He said that while the Jewish students should have complained to the school's administration to have the offensive posters removed, there is never a justification for physical violence.

"We are very concerned that there has been tension on the campuses since we came back from winter break, as there has been on a lot of North American campuses [following Israel's military operation in Gaza], but when it crosses a line from tension to violence, we have reason to be extremely concerned," he said.

"The fact that in both cases, the students had their Magen David [necklaces] ripped from their necks is a deep concern."

Romy Ritter, director of Canadian Jewish Congress' Pacific region, said that while there are elements of the police news release that don't entirely reflect the Jewish students' accounts of the incidents, she's confident that once all the evidence is gathered, justice will be served.

"Once [the police] finish their investigation and review all the evidence, the truth and the facts of what really transpired will come to light," Ritter said.

She added that she's been in touch with the police and "has been reassured that they are taking this incident very seriously, and the hate crime team is actively investigating as well."

No arrests have been made, and the investigation into whether the incidents were motivated by hate is still ongoing, Ritter said.

Anti-Israel resolution shelved by McGill students

Continued from page 1

More than 700 students attended the assembly, which was closed to the media. This was an extraordinarily high number, and about 50 had to be turned away, Turner said. The SSMU fall general assembly did not attract even the quorum of 150.

Hillel had criticized the resolution as a one-sided and inaccurate condemnation of Israel, and warned that if it passed it would "turn McGill into an environment where hate, fear and division flourish" and result in an "unprecedented polarization that will isolate and marginalize" students and staff.

According to the rules, the SSMU was obliged to entertain the opponents' motion, Turner said, as it was to put the resolution, proposed by the student club Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR), on the agenda. Any undergraduate or student club can present a resolution if the signatures of at least 100 undergraduates are attached to it.

The resolution called on the SSMU to condemn "the bombing of educational institutions in Gaza, including the Islamic University in Gaza City and the UNRWA-run schools," and asked McGill principal Heather Munroe-Blum and the Canadian government to do the same. The group also wanted the SSMU to undertake a public campaign to support the right to education of Palestinian students in Gaza.

The resolution stated that educational and other civilian institutions, including hospitals, were deliberately targeted.

Continued on page 26

חדשה בקנדה

נינה שנהב

אם תשאלו אותי, אני שומרת כשרות. לא כל אחד יסכים, אבל מבחינתי אני כן. אני לא נוגעת בבייקון, בשרימפס, או בשאר פירות הים המלבבים. גם בקר לא מוכשר לא בא אל פי. אני כן אוכלת עוף לא גלאט כושר.

רוב החברים שלי בישראל מלגלגים נואשות על התכונה הזו שלי, לאכול כשר, ודבים אפילו חושבים שזה לא מתאים לאופי הפתוח והשובבי שלי. רוב חבריי חילוניים מובהקים, ובשהייתי מצייצת במסעדה "לא" רפה לקלמרי, הייתי חשה במבטי פליאה ואפילו זילזול.

עדיין, אלו הם החברים שלי, ובכל אספקט אחר אנו דומים להפליא. בקנדה, הדבר לא שונה בהרבה. נכון שיש לי ידידים שומרי מסורת, אבל אצל ידידיי החילוניים, אני בחזקת דיסוננס. לידידים הלא יהודים שלי אני בכלל לא מספרת. א' כי כשניסיתי, אף אחד לא ידע על מה אני מדברת בכלל. וב' אלה שכן ידעו, הרגשתי שזה מרחיק בינינו.

אותו יום חביב, קיבלתי הזמנת יום הולדת מג'ניפר, ידידה לא יהודיה שהכרתי יומיים לפני (תציצו לטור שלי מלפני שבועיים, ותבינו למה הדגשתי 'יומיים לפני'). הזמנתי לארוחת ערב חגיגית במסעדה יוקרתית.

"אל תשכחי שאת אוכלת כשר!" התרה בי מאיר לפני שיצאתי.

המסעדה נראתה נפלא. נישקתי את ידידתי העשירה (בהזדמנות נדבר על מה צריך להביא פה למתנת יומולדת, או-קיי?) ונטלתי בשמחה את התפריט ההדור. "את יכולה להחליט מה את מזמינה, אבל בעקרון ג'ני כבר הזמינה לנו את המנות הכי מפוארות!" לחשה לי שכנתי לשולחן. בדיוק אז הגיע מלצר מנומס, והניח לפני כל אחד מאיתנו צלחת מלאה בשרימפסים ענקיים וידרדרים, שחייכו אלי בקריצות מהצלחת.

כולם התחילו לטבול ולזלול, ורק אני שתקתי ושיחקתי קצת עם החברה'ס השמנמנים. לנוכח מבטי המפליאה, אמרתי שקר לי לאכול משהו קר, ומייד שיניתי נושא. הצלחת שלי חזרה מלאה לידי המלצר המעולב. "תיכף יהיה משהו חם." הבטיחה לי ג'ניפר בחיוך, והוסיפה "לא ידעתי שבישראל אוכלים רק שרימפסים חמים." המנה העיקרית הגיעה במלא תפארתה: צלעות חזיר פריכות על מצע פירה וגרידת בייקון ואגוזים מעל. כולם התחילו לזלול, בעוד אני משחקת עם הצלעות המזמינות ולא מביאה שום דבר אל פי.

פה כבר התחילו להפציע המבטים התמהים מצד הסביבה המנומסת. "אני...אני לא ממש משוגעת על חזיר..." מילמלתי בביישנות. ידידתי השבושה קראה מייד למלצר (שהתחיל לשנוא אותי), והודתה לו לדוחי לי בקצרה על כל מנות השף. הכל היה לובסטרי וחזירי למדי, עד שנעצרנו במנת עוף. "עוף!" צעקתי בחדווה, "אני אקח עוף!". זו כנראה היתה המנה הכי פחות נחשבת, כי כולם מעט התפלאו. כולם התפלאו הרבה יותר, כשהמנה המקושטת הגיעה אל שולחני, ושוב לא עשתה שום קולות של להגיע אלי לפה. אתם מבינים, הנתח המקסים היה טבול כולו בחמאה, מצופה בשוקולד ובשמנת, וכדי להעצים את הרגע, פיזרו עליו גם מוצרלה מותכת. ג'ניפר הביטה בי בשורת רוח (בכל זאת, שילמה על המנות שלי מספר לא מבוטל של דולרים), ולא אמרה מילה.

האווירה נעשתה דחוסה. לא יכולתי יותר. קמתי ממקומי והלחשתי להגיד את אשר על ליבי, זה הכל. שיזלזלו, שיתרחקו ממני, לא אכפת לי כלום. "תבינו..." השתלטתי קלות, "אני שומרת...אני שומרת על הגיזרה..."

ג'ניפר הביטה בי בהקלה. "את בדיאטה?" שאלה, הנהנתי באומץ. שאר המסובים בחנו את מתניי. היקף ישבני, מה שלא תרצו (לפחות אני לא רוצה). "כל הכבוד!" אמרה לבסוף שכנתי לשולחן. "חשבתי שאאוכל לא טעים לך." הוסיפה ג'ניפר בהקלה. "לא מזיק לאף אחד קצת לשמוח." הנהן גברבר ממולי, שמעתה ועד עולם יהיה אויבי. מספר משפטי הסכמה מולמלו, והכל חזר למקומו בשלום (למרות שסירבתי גם לעוף ברוטב יוגורט דל קלוריות).

"ינאכשיו," הכריז המלצר המנומס שלנו באושר, "הקינוחים!" המלצר הוביל בגאווה ענלת כסף, ובה מיליון מנות קינוח מדהימות שלא ראיתי מעודי: עוגות קצפת חלביות במרקם מרנג ונגינה, פחזניות שקולוד נוטפות מוצרט מופס עם סל פירות יער ממותקים בפודינג, שבבות של קרם ובצק עלים בשלל גוונים ומרקמים, ומה לא. הריח נטף לי מהפה. הנה הגיע הביצוי לכל הסיוט שעברתי.

כולם הזמינו, ובדיוק כשהגיע תורי לבחור, הניחה ג'ניפר את ידועה על כתפי ולחשה: "תהיי חזקה. ביקשתי מהמלצר שיביא לך כמה פירות חתוכים מהטבטה."

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On Campus

Anti-Israel resolution shelved at McGill

Continued from page 25

Hillel said the figures cited by SPHR concerning the number of schools struck and the number of casualties in Gaza and who they were is still in dispute.

The resolution was unprecedented at McGill, where debate over Middle Eastern politics has been low-key compared to some other Canadian campuses, and it touched off heated debate in the week before the biannual general assembly. The resolution was the subject of much space in the student press and online, through the Facebook social networking site.

Hillel had attempted to prevent the resolution from being entertained by the SSMU, arguing that the SSMU constitution states that the body's council "will not take a position on external political issues that council deems to be extremely divisive among students at McGill University."

The SSMU speaker did not agree with this interpretation, Turner said.

SPHR spokesperson Khaled Kteily said before the assembly that the intention was to have the student body "recognize that, without the basic human right to education, no real progress will ever be made [in the Palestinian-Israel conflict] and that through the destruction and damage of schools and universities, Israel is infringing upon the Gazan civilians' basic human rights."

Turner said that in the five years of her association with the SSMU, it has not received any resolution proposal so emotionally charged.

"Certainly, the resolution caused a lot of controversy, and it is a divisive issue because there are incredibly strong views on both sides. But even though passions were high, the debate was substantive and as civilized as one could expect when the issue is so personal to so many people."

Another indication that Middle East politics are becoming more contentious at McGill is the public endorsement by 30 its professors and employees of a boycott of Israeli academic institutions, including such respected professors as Gregory Baum and Margaret Lock. Their names appeared among the more than 80 staff of Quebec universities and colleges signing a manifesto published in Le Devoir last month.

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Deal to release Schalit reportedly in the works

By AVI ISSACHAROFF
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.

JERUSALEM — A deal for the release of abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit hinges on a dispute between Israel and Hamas over four Palestinian prisoners whom Israel refuses to free, two pan-Arab newspapers reported Monday.

Israel has agreed, however, to release all of the other prisoners Hamas is demanding in return for Schalit, the London-based dailies Al-Quds, al-Arabi and Al-Sharq Al-Awsat reported.

The papers named the four as Abdullah Barghouti, Ibrahim Hamad and Abbas Sayed, all Hamas men, and Ahmed Sa'adat, the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Each of the prisoners was behind a string of terror attacks. Sayed was the mastermind behind the massacre at the Park Hotel in Netanya on Passover in 2002, in which 29 civilians were killed.

Abdullah Barghouti, a relative of jailed Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti, prepared the bomb belts and devices used in terror attacks, including the bombings in Jerusalem at the Sbarro pizza parlor, the Moment café and the cafeteria at the Hebrew University, as well as the suicide attack at the Sheffield snooker hall in Rishon Letzion.

Hamad, the commander of the armed wing of Hamas in Ramallah, has also been convicted of involvement in a number of these attacks.

Sa'adat is in jail for ordering the 2001 assassination of former tourism minister Rehavam Ze'evi.

The Egyptian daily Al-Gomhoria, meanwhile, reported Monday that Hamas and Israel would reach an agreement for a truce in Gaza within the next 48 hours.

The reports came after Egyptian sources told Ha'aretz on Sunday that Hamas has acceded over the past few days to the Israeli demand to link the opening of Gaza's border crossings to the release of Schalit.

Gilad Schalit

UNRWA suspends distribution

JTA

A United Nations relief agency is suspending operations in the Gaza Strip until Hamas returns supplies it seized.

A spokesperson for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency said last Friday that unless Hamas refrains from interfering with distribution, it will not resume operations.

The terrror group, which controls Gaza, seized 200 tons of food and supplies last week that had been stored by UNRWA, the largest distributor of relief in the strip. Western nations ban direct dealings with Hamas. The group seeks control of all facets of relief in areas it controls as a way of maintaining its political leverage.

There were multiple reports last week of armed Hamas men raiding UNRWA storage areas.

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European Jews urge EC to denounce anti-Semitism

— please see page 37

Vatican calls on bishop to recant denial of the Holocaust

JTA

NEW YORK — The Vatican has called on a Holocaust-denying bishop to recant his views.

In a statement Feb. 4, the Vatican secretariat of state said that Bishop Richard Williamson "must absolutely, unequivocally and publicly distance himself from his positions on the Shoah."

Bishop Williamson, a member of a schismatic Catholic sect, said in a recent television interview that he doubted the existence of Nazi gas chambers and believed that only a few hundred thousand Jews lost their lives during the Holocaust. His views generated a crisis for the church after Pope Benedict XVI revoked a long-standing excommunication order against Bishop Williamson and three other bishops last month.

The statement comes as more voices were added to the chorus of criticism that has greeted Benedict's decision to pursue greater unity within the church by moving towards a rapprochement with the renegade sect.

Bishop Richard Williamson

The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, said Feb. 3 that Bishop Williamson's views were "utterly false," the Catholic News Service reported. And on Feb. 4, the World Jewish Congress weighed in, saying the Pope's decision was "badly advised" and welcoming the Vatican's insistence that the bishop recant.

Israel's Foreign Ministry released a statement saying that the Jewish state viewed the reinstatement "with regret and concern."

The statement continued: "The reinstatement of a Holocaust denier by the Holy See offends every Jew, in Israel and around the world, and humiliates the memory of all Holocaust victims and survivors. We expect the Holy See to decisively renounce all Holocaust deniers in general, wherever they may be, and Bishop Williamson in particular.

"We view the recent remarks made by the Holy See and senior Vatican officials admonishing the manifestation of Holocaust denial as the first step in the right direction, and expect more explicit and unequivocal decisions and statements on this issue."

Also last week, the Vatican rejected criticism by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, a Protestant, over the issue. Merkel called Feb. 3 for Pope Benedict to condemn Holocaust denial more clearly, but the Vatican countered that he had already condemned Holocaust denial in "unequivocal terms."

Hamas used rockets to sway vote: PA

© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.*

The Palestinian Authority foreign minister said Monday that Hamas was trying to influence the outcome of Tuesday's general election by continuing to fire rockets into southern Israel.

Riad Malki said Hamas did not want to see a pro-peace government elected in Israel during the parliamentary vote, because such a government would pursue a political deal with the PA.

On Sunday, two rockets struck southern Israel, violating an informal Israel-Hamas truce.

Malki told reporters in Warsaw that the PA was very much worried that such attacks might really push Israeli public opinion and the voters to vote for an anti-peace government.

The foreign minister's comments came as polls suggested that Israel's next government could indeed be more hawkish than the current coalition, with the hardline Yisrael Beiteinu Party projected to win more Knesset seats than the left-of-centre Labor Party, and with the right-wing Likud party projected to the be the largest contingent in the Knesset.

The Kadima-led government under Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has pursued peace talks with the Palestinian Authority since the Annapolis Summit in November 2007. The summit, which focused on a two-state solution to the conflict, was meant to relaunch peace talks which had laid dormant since the outbreak of the second intifadah in 2000.

The talks did not include Hamas, which seized Gaza by force in 2007 and does not recognize Israel's right to exist.

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite our readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes. Stories should not exceed 2,000 words.

We must receive your submissions no later than Friday, March 12. E-mail submissions are preferred, but works can also be sent by mail or brought to our office. E-mail: **info@cjnews.com.** Mail: 1500 Don Mills Rd., Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4. Submissions will *not* be returned. Only writers whose work is chosen for publication will be contacted.

CJN Purim Art Contest

It's time again for our annual **Purim Art Contest**.

Who can enter: Children in grades 1 to 6 inclusive are eligible. The children of *CJN* employees are not eligible.

Prizes: The judges will choose one drawing from two different students in each grade. These "winning" drawings will be published in *The CJN*'s 2009 Purim Poster. In addition, each of the 12 children whose drawings have been selected will receive a cheque for $25.

How to enter: You may submit as many drawings as you want. However, they should not be too small nor too large. Please paint or draw bright, bold, colourful pictures. You may use markers, crayons, paint or pencils. Please send us your name, address, phone number, age and grade along with your drawings.

You may mail or deliver your drawings to: CJN Community Contests, The Canadian Jewish News, 1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4. If you want us to return the pictures to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, we will be unable to do so.

The contest closes at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2009. We will undoubtedly receive many wonderful submissions from children all across the country. But only 12 of the drawings will be chosen as the "winners." The judges will base their decisions on a number of factors such as: the use of colour, the imaginative quality of the drawing and the way it tells an aspect of the story of Purim. The judges' decisions will be final. The chances of winning depend upon the number and quality of submissions received.

How the winner will be announced: The children whose pictures are chosen will be notified by telephone before the start of Shabbat on Friday, February 20, 2009.

When the prizes will be awarded: The "winning" pictures will be published in *The CJN* of March 5, 2009. Have fun and good luck.

Any litigation respecting the conduct and awarding of a prize in this contest may be submitted to the Régie des Loteries et courses du Québec.

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Aish HaTorah founder dies

JTA

JERUSALEM — Rabbi Noah Weinberg, the founder and dean of Aish HaTorah Institutes, died at his home in Jerusalem last week.

Weinberg, who was treated late last year with chemotherapy and radiation treatments, and who recently broke his leg and shoulder, was 78 when he died last Thursday morning, Feb. 5.

Obituary

Aish HaTorah, which Weinberg founded in 1974, operates 27 full-time branches throughout the world, with 100,000 people attending its programs annually in 77 cities in 17 countries. Aish HaTorah operates a rabbinical training college at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, as well as a hesder yeshiva where students combine military service with Torah study.

Rabbi Noah Weinberg

"Rabbi Weinberg dedicated his life to bringing a renaissance within Jewish people, to reach out to every Jew and reconnect him to the depth and meaning of our heritage," a statement from Aish HaTorah read. "The Jewish people are meant to be a light unto nations; Rabbi Weinberg undertook the task to galvanize the Jewish people and inspire us to live up to our mission and be Kiddush Hashem – to sanctify God's Name in this world."

Weinberg had made several attempts in the late 1960s to found a yeshiva for assimilated young men. He was a co-founder of the Ohr Somayach yeshiva for beginners and returnees to traditional Judaism.

He was a graduate of the Yeshivas Chaim Berlin in Brooklyn, N.Y., and Ner Yisrael in Baltimore, Md.

Rabbi Mitch Mandel, a founder of Aish HaTorah Toronto and its director of outreach and event programming, said that anybody who was in Rabbi Weinberg's presence felt "a combination of being loved and a sense that here is someone who believes in my potential, and has the ability to take Jewish wisdom and make it impactful and relevant to anybody."

Rabbi Mandel, who studied with Rabbi Weinberg from 1976 to 1980 after meeting him at the Kotel as a tourist, said, "I think that his greatness was in his love for the Jewish people and his love of God, and that they were the truest kind of love, because he understood that to really love God you have to love people, and to really love people you have to love God."

With files from Frances Kraft

On cjnews.com this week

- **Toronto's Rabbi Tradburks remembers Rabbi Weinberg as one of the great Jewish leaders of our time.**
  — Comment

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Toronto artist turns recycled material into jewelry

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Vera Fischer, a Toronto-based artist, hopes that her newest venture, creating something new and beautiful from the old and vintage, will enrich people's experiences and help them share in her creative process.

Fischer, whose artistic career has spanned over 40 years, is passionate about her "wearable art;" hand-crafted necklaces, bracelets and pins combining vintage pieces with free-form wire.

A "consummate collector" since 1975, Fischer said she enjoyed creating art from recycled material.

"The recycled art started with boxes and bottles, collecting materials that people would throw out, like at every birthday party for the kids, I kept all the paper… I'm a big collector of things that are reusable," said Fischer, who had her own gallery at Harbourfront Centre's Queen's Quay Terminal in the 1990s and had her paintings shown as part of various exhibits at the Koffler Gallery, John B. Aird Gallery, Columbus Centre and others.

Vera Fischer

"I started to go to Goodwill and places like Value Village to collect vintage jewelry and evening bags. I painted on the evening bags first, which I still do. They are hand-painted, one-of-a-kind evening bags. The jewelry I collected, there were pieces that broke, and I started to reclaim them and create new things out of them."

Fischer said that as a child growing up in Hungary, she was part of "a close family on whom a great shadow of tragedy hung." Both her parents were Holocaust survivors.

Her father, a master tinsmith and welder by trade, and her mother, determined to move forward from their tragic past, influenced her greatly, Fischer said.

But in 1956, the Hungarian Revolution began and her family decided to leave the country, their home and all their belongings.

"We, like many other Jewish people, turned around and left everything behind to illegally cross the border," Fischer said.

"When we came to Canada, I couldn't speak English and I was isolated. I felt lonely and isolated and art was how I communicated.

"Art was something that I excelled in throughout public school and later on. It really was a great part of my self-realization."

She said that her love of collecting old things and recreating them stem from her childhood.

"The past is mysterious. A lot of our family and heirlooms were gone and so I was drawn to things that had a history and that is why I, to do this day, collect old photographs… and so forth."

She said there is also an environmental aspect to her art. Fischer said she began collecting boxes, papers, and bottles for her collages because she hated the waste.

"The beautiful things that are thrown away – I hate it and I couldn't believe the things I could find, so certainly, call it what you like, recycle, reclaim, but there was a need for me to want to conserve it."

She said that while she benefits mentally and spiritually from the process of creating art, she hopes that it will enrich others as well.

"Creativity does grow in everyone, and it is satisfying to express yourself… It is also a tool in coping with changes in your life, and art has always been there for me in different stages," Fischer said.

"It's just a life-saving device because you're constantly able to work through things, and the fact that people respond to it is very nice."

She said she makes only about 50 or 60 pieces of her jewelry a year. Once her individual pieces grow in numbers, she hopes to put them on display at a gallery rather than a store, due to the amount of work she puts into them.

She has been selling her vintage-inspired jewelry and bags privately and at select stores. To contact Fischer, e-mail studiofischer@yahoo.com or call 416-638-0661.

Montreal teenager nominated for two Junos

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Teenage jazz singer Nikki Yanofsky's meteoric career has reached yet another high note with her nomination for two Juno music awards, including best new artist of the year.

Yanofsky, who turned 15 on Feb. 8, is also nominated for best vocal jazz album for her debut Ella… Of Thee I Swing, a CD/DVD package capturing her sold-out show, a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald, in Montreal last October.

The Junos will be held on March 28 at Vancouver's General Motors Place.

"I totally flipped out when I heard I was nominated," Yanofsky said. "I really, really appreciate just getting the nomination. It's such a great accomplishment that winning becomes almost irrelevant. I can't say how happy I am."

Yanofsky is competing with Crystal Shawanda, Jessie Farrell, Kreesha Turner and Lights for the new artist prize, and recordings by Diana Panton, Elizabeth Shepherd, Molly Johnson and Yvette Tollar for the album award.

Yanofsky's precocious talent, both as a singer and stage presence, first came to public attention when as an 11-year-old she performed with her father Richard's band Past Their Prime-Time Players at the Battle of the Bands, a fundraiser for Maimonides Geriatric Centre in Montreal.

The following year, she bowled over the public when she was the opening outdoor act at the Montreal Jazz Festival, the youngest performer to headline her own show in the festival's 29-year history.

Nikki Yanofsky

Last summer, she had four sold-out concerts, and another was presented in October because of the demand, which became the basis for the nominated album.

Her parents, Richard and Elyssa, say she has been singing since she could speak and that by age 10, her tastes had gravitated to classical jazz, especially the songs of the legendary Fitzgerald. She was soon belting out songs such as It Don't Mean a Thing and A Tisket, A Tasket, and she became particularly adept at scatting.

Her voice has been described as mature well beyond her years – both powerful and velvety – and she astonishes audiences with her confidence and poise.

Yanofsky said she has wanted to be a singer for as long as she can remember and sees her future as a singer "whether in a restaurant or before a global audience."

She insists she's having fun, and wouldn't be devoting herself to singing in the way she does if she wasn't.

"It's fabulous the way things are turning out," she said, adding that she plans to "follow the road wherever it leads."

She said she's often asked if she's missing out on doing the things other young people do, such as going to parties and hanging out with friends.

"I still do those things. I just sing as well," said Yanofsky, who appears to have remained remarkably humble.

The Grade 9 student recognizes she was born with an uncommon ear for song that allowed her to quickly picked up the music her parents liked to play. "My father says I have a photographic memory for music."

At the same time, Yanofsky stresses that she puts a lot of work into everything she does, and that's probably why she appears so poised on stage. "I've never felt any stage fright or nerves before a performance. I think all the work I put into a song really pays off."

Yanofsky has performed or collaborated with such stars as Oliver Jones, Céline Dion, Herbie Hancock, Wyclef Jean and Marvin Hamlisch, the latter at Carnegie Hall in New York and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

She has sung the national anthems for the Montreal Canadiens and for the Los Angeles Lakers, and at the CFL Grey Cup game in Montreal in November.

She is also a favourite at community events and headlined at the Hope & Cope 25th anniversary gala in 2006, the Montreal Children's Hospital fundraiser in 2007 and the 2008 Montreal ORT benefit last fall, to name a few.

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Russian violist brings his unique style to Roy Thomson Hall

By RITA POLIAKOV
Special to The CJN

Svetlana Dvoretskaia was about 12 years old when she first saw violist Yuri Bashmet perform. The famous Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow was packed, the crowd was excited and the police were guarding the venue. But what she remembered most was the silence.

"When he played, it's silence. No one's coughing," she said. "What I do remember is the silence after he finished – that moment when people are digesting the music, when the audience is still numb – then you have this explosion of applause."

On Feb.17, after several years of negotiations, Dvoretskaia, the producer of Show One Entertainment, a company that showcases high-profile musicians and artists,will be bringing Bashmet to Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall.

Bashmet, along with his musical group the Moscow Soloists, won a Grammy in 2008 for best small ensemble performance. Although he started his career determined to become a rock star, he is known as the performer who brought the viola into the limelight.

"He was not planning to be a classical music performer," Dvoretskaia said. "He always wanted to be a rock star, and he played rock guitar for the longest time."

Bashmet began playing classical music only as a favour to his mother. Although he started with the violin, he was once asked to try the viola, an instrument that many saw as inconsequential. He quickly proved them wrong.

"He's one of the very important musicians in the world," Dvoretskaia said. "He's a very serious household name in Russia."

Bashmet has a unique style. "He has long hair," Dvoretskaia said. "When he plays, he's very emotional. He moves his head a lot, his hair is all over. When he plays, he has tears sometimes." Just recently, it was reported that Bashmet was playing so fast, he broke his 250-year-old viola at a concert in Italy.

In Toronto, Bashmet will perform two solo pieces, Paganini's Concertino in A Minor and Bruch's Kol Nidrei, an old Jewish prayer that's sung on Yom Kippur.

When reviewing the list of possible songs, Dvoretskaia immediately knew Kol Nidrei was a significant choice.

"As soon as I saw Kol Nidrei, [I knew] that was something I wanted them to play," she said. "I'm Jewish myself. If there's any chance to somehow popularize Jewish tradition or Jewish music, I take that chance."

Growing up in St. Petersburg, Russia, Dvoretskaia often had to hide her religion.

"At a certain point, I didn't even know I was Jewish," she said. "That country was anti-Semitic at that time."

Dvoretskaia believes music is a way to encourage understanding. "I strongly believe that music has no borders," she said. "It's my obligation to promote and present Jewish music to non-Jews, because I can."

Dvoretskaia hopes the concert will encourage Torontonians to embrace classical music.

"A lot of people I know never listened to classical music before," she said. "It can awaken something that sleeps deep inside."

Bashmet will perform at Roy Thomson Hall on Feb. 17 at 8 p.m. Tickets are $45 to $90. Call 416-872-4255.

SIXTY-SIX

England, the summer 1966 and Bernie's family is preparing to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah. The exact day is chosen, despite the fact that the final day of the World Cup of soccer is scheduled to take place at the same time, as everyone is certain that the British team will be out of the competition long before then. However, England keeps winning and winds up playing for the championship. So guess where most of the guests are the day of Bernie's bar mitzvah? In front of the telly. This film skillfully recreates the time period and features terrific performances by all, including Helena Bonham Carter as Bernie's mother. **Ticket includes free entry for 2 children under the age of 13.**

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

TEATRON JEWISH THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS THE DYBBUK WITH VETERAN ACTOR HOWARD JEROME

Veteran actor-singer **Howard Jerome** stars in The Dybbuk, Teatron Jewish Theatre Company's latest production, which also features **Mark Albert**, **Ron Boyd**, **Jonah Hundert**, **Sarah Illiatovitch-Goldman** and **Anita Shir-Jacob** in a cast of more than 20 actors in all.

The classic **S. Anski** play, translated from the original Yiddish, is directed by **Ari Weisberg**. $22 to $44. Leah Posluns Theatre, Feb. 25 to March 8. 416-781-5527, www.teatrontheatre.com

* * *

Classic 1960s Film Holds Up Well: Toronto Jewish Film Society presents I Love You, Alice B. Toklas! (1968, U.S.A.), co-written by **Paul Mazursky** and featuring **Peter Sellers**' classic performance of a man caught between two worlds. Feeling increasingly nervous as his wedding approaches, Harold Fine, a thirtyish Jewish attorney, takes inspiration from his hippie brother and a plateful of surprising brownies to shed his inhibitions and get a taste of bohemian life.

With speaker **Mark Clamen**. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. $15 general admission, rush tickets available 15 minutes before each screening. Sunday, Feb. 22, 4 and 7:30 p.m.

* * *

Neshama Carlebach

Attention Yiddish Lovers: Friends of Yiddish presents Catskill Honeymoon, a film in Yiddish and English that recaptures the glory days of the legendary Borscht Belt. Released in 1949, Catskill Honeymoon portrays a Jewish resort hotel celebrating the 50th anniversary of a pair of longtime clients with an old-fashioned variety show featuring singers, dancers, comedians and impressionists. Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., one block west of Bathurst Street. Members free, guests $3. Sunday, Feb.15, 2 p.m.

Lovers of Yiddish will also appreciate these two upcoming performances:

• **The Sisters of Sheynville**, the popular Yiddish-singing sextet, perform at Chalkers Pub, 247 Marlee Ave. Monday, Feb. 16, 7 to 10 p.m. (Kid friendly to 9 p.m.) 416-789-2531. www.chalkerspub.com

• **Mitch Smolkin** and **Nina Shapilsky** perform at the Free Times Café Sunday brunch on Feb. 15. Two seatings, 10:30 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. 320 College St., two blocks west of Spadina. Reservations, 416-967-1078. (Smolkin's recent CD, A Star Is Born, has been called "the most exciting, inventive, beautiful and just plain interesting Yiddish album in years." www.mitchsmolkin.com)

* * *

Names in the News: Late news arrived to Eye on Arts that New York-based singer **Neshama Carlebach**, daughter of the late **Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach**, performed a "free unity concert" in the Hart House Music Room, University of Toronto, on Monday, Feb. 9. Focused on fostering peace in the Middle East, the event was organized on behalf of YONA (Your Outreach Network of the Arts), an organization devoted to building bridges through the arts. Carlebach was in Toronto to give a concert at Beth Tikvah Synagogue on Feb. 8.

* * *

Arts in Brief

•Studio 5040 Cabaret presents Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places, a Valentine's cabaret of seriously cynical songs and sad but true horror stories about looking for love. With **Gabi Epstein** and **Patrick Brown**. $15. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Feb. 13. www.studio5040cabarets.com.

• The 7th annual Winterfolk Festival presents 80 artists in 100 shows at four venues on the Danforth at Broadview. Feb. 13 to 15. www.winterfolk.com.

• Sundays on Bloor features a Jewish Life Lecture with **Diana Mingail** on the topic "Customs, Traditions, Sacred Music and Superstitions of the Jews of India." $9 drop-in, includes refreshments. Miles Nadal JCC, Sunday, Feb. 15, 2 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

Gloria Valentine

• Entertainment By Demand presents Glory's Grace, by **Kathleen Jackson Allamby**, a dark comedy about the effects of Alzheimer's disease on relationships. With **Vince Carlin**, **Rochelle Douris**, **Alastair Love**, **Anne Meighan** and **Gloria Valentine**. Theatre Passe Muraille, 16 Ryerson Ave. Previews Feb. 20, runs Feb. 21 to March 7. 416-504-7529

• North Toronto Players presents an adaptation of the **Gilbert and Sullivan** play Iolanthe, "set in Ottawa, where the fairies are falling in love with the feds." Featuring a live orchestra and direction by **Michael Harms**. City Playhouse, 1000 New Westminster Dr., Vaughan. $15 to $25. Feb. 20 to March 12. 905-727-2209, www.northtorontoplayers.com

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Books & Authors

Collection of essays is a real guilt trip

By SIDURA LUDWIG
Special to the CJN

Hey, have you heard this one?

Q: How many Jewish mothers does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

A: None. I'll just sit in the dark.

Guilt is as much a part of Jewish culture as chicken soup and matzah balls. And the varieties are endless: guilt for being too religious, or not religious enough; for enjoying a bacon double cheeseburger, or for skipping shul; for calling your mother once a day, or only once a month. What would we complain about with our friends over countless cups of coffee were it not for the guilt?

Editor Ruth Andrew Ellenson explores this question in her fascinating anthology of essays The Modern Jewish Girl's Guide to Guilt (Dutton, 2005), a National Jewish Book Award winner.

Twenty-eight Jewish women writers of the modern day are gathered together in this collection like a roundtable discussion. Each takes her stab at Jewish guilt. The result is a diverse collection of personal essays covering a wide variety of topics: loyalty to Israel, having (or not having) children, marrying out of the faith, divorcing the perfect Jewish man, finding the perfect Jewish man, and (maybe most importantly) saying no to guilt.

More than just a study of Jewish women's guilt, the essays in this collection go beyond the cover topic and explore the Jewish woman's struggle for identity today.

As Ellenson writes in her introduction, "For Jewish women today, there is a fundamental struggle: where do we end and where do our people begin?"

There is Gina Nahai's piece, Mercy, which reflects on the lives of Jewish women in Iran and what it means to have escaped that oppression as a woman now living in freedom in Los Angeles.

Rebecca Walker's essay, Expecting, follows Walker's journey in naming her newborn son – whether to honour her Jewish heritage or her chosen Buddhist faith.

In What Will They Think? Tova Mirvis chooses to be true to herself and not cover her hair as an Orthodox, married woman. She writes: "I felt as if the purpose was not to cover my hair, but to cover myself. When I ripped my hat off my head, the second I walked into my apartment, I felt like I could be myself again. Once I was walking down Broadway and caught a glimpse of myself in a mirror. A voice whispered out from underneath the hat: this is not who you are."

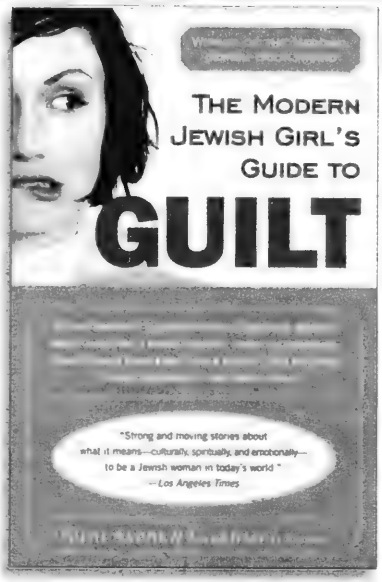
'This is not who you are'

While many of the women work through their guilt to discover who they really are, their mothers take a bit of a beating. As the joke implies, the voice of guilt in this collection is often the mother (and sometimes the father). In You Sit in the Dark, I'm Coming Out of the Closet, Kera Bolonik holds off exposing herself as a lesbian out of concern for how her mother's friends will respond.

My Private Caller is a humorous look at Lori Gottlieb's call display, which she uses to screen her mother's calls.

In Being Fruitful, Binnie Kirshenbaum chooses not to have children, much to her mother's dismay. She writes: "'I loved being a mother,' my mother said. Perhaps, but given that she flew to work the minute my brother and I were old enough to fend for ourselves, maybe my mother didn't love being a mother quite as much as she protested. I did not doubt that my mother loved us, but loving your children is not the same thing as loving motherhood."

What impresses most about this collection is the honesty, which at times is gut wrenching. Jenna Kalinsky offers an intimate portrayal of her marriage to a German man in the essay, Great, My Daughter Is Marrying a Nazi. She writes openly about the loneliness she felt moving to Germany, their struggle to bring their two cultures together, and then the ultimate difficult decision to split.


THE MODERN JEWISH GIRL'S GUIDE TO
GUILT
"Strong and moving stories about what it means—culturally, spiritually, and emotionally—to be a Jewish woman in today's world."
—Los Angeles Times

Likewise, Cynthia Kaplan's American Express offers a painstaking and touching look at a granddaughter's love for her ailing grandmother and the guilt she and her family feel in deciding to place her in a nursing home.

And then there is Big Mouth: Jewish Women and Appetite, in which Wendy Shanker rants with such passion about why so many Jewish women are not only big in size, but in personality and spirit. This essay will have you cheering by the end.

Not all the essays are as successful. Dara Horn's The Last American Nerd is a lovely look at the relationship between teacher, student and the love of academic life, but never really seemed to fit the guilt topic. Also Tell Me About Your Mother, by Molly Jong-Fast, followed the author's relationship with a number of therapists, but does not take the reader anywhere deep.

(As an aside, I was curious as to why so many of the writers in this collection seemed to live – or have lived – in New York City, and as a runner-up, Los Angeles. Do Jewish women outside of the American Northeast not experience guilt? Do Jewish women writers not exist in places like Chicago, Denver or St. Louis? As much variety as there was in essay topics, the tone of the essays began to feel the same when the stories were taking place on either the Upper East Side or the Upper West Side.)

This book is very much a collection of current Jewish angst. Reading it was like sitting around a kitchen table with a group of girlfriends, each taking her turn to unload. The title is apt in reflecting on the sum of the contents inside: this collection is indeed a guide to understanding the modern Jewish woman, her identity crisis and why she carries around so much guilt.

Sidura Ludwig is a writer living in Thornhill. Her first novel, Holding My Breath, was published by Key Porter Books in 2007. She is working on her next novel, and has never lived in New York City.

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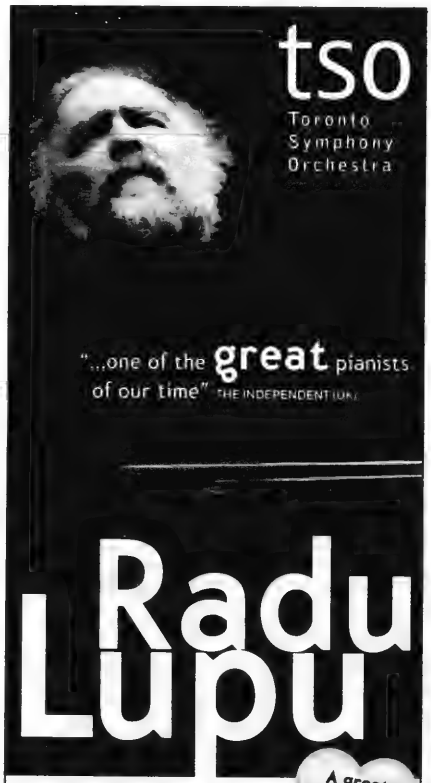
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Arts & Travel

Young actor just wants to keep on acting

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Rachel Marcus, 11, has a lot in common with Booky, the role she plays in Booky's Crush, produced by Platt Productions and Shaftesbury Films and premiering on CBC TV, Feb. 15 at 8 p.m.

"I'm determined to get what I want, and I love to solve other people's problems. I'm always trying to figure things out," Rachel said in a recent telephone interview.

Booky's Crush is the third instalment in a series of made-for-TV movies based on books set in Depression era 1930s Toronto – That Scatterbrained Booky, With Love from Booky, and As Ever Booky – by Bernice Thurman Hunter, a former department store clerk who wrote her first book in 1981 when she was already a grandmother.

Rachel also played Booky – her first professional job as a result of her first audition about 1-1/2 years ago – in the second instalment of the movie series, Booky and the Secret Santa, for which she received a Gemini nomination.

A competitive dancer who has won awards in musical theatre, Rachel, a Grade 6 public school student in Thornhill, has also appeared in a number of school plays.

"I decided I wanted to act professionally after I met Daniel Magder [17], who played in the TV series Life With Derek. I asked him how he got into acting, and he told me to try out for an agent. I did that, and she gave me a script to memorize. Then I got the Booky role.

"I don't feel like I am Booky, but I do know her very well.

Rachel Marcus

If she wanted to act, she would try, just like I did. I had a lot of fun during the filming. I never got nervous, because I have lots of experience on stage with my dancing."

In her new role, Booky and her friends are just discovering boys, and she is quite interested in a new boy that she has been chosen to tutor. "My mother in the movie [Megan Follows] is very smart, and she helps me out a lot. We had lots of money worries, but we always managed."

Acting and dancing keep her quite busy, Rachel said, "but I always have time for my friends. They're very important to me, and I would not give them up for anything. I think Booky would be like that, too."

As for her future plans, Rachel said she wants to finish school – her favourite subjects are art and drama – and she wants to play Booky in a third movie. "I want to act for the rest of my life, and I'm looking forward to acting on stage."

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Planning a simcha?
Check out the Bridal Supplement
Coming next week to the The Canadian Jewish news

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550 WORKSHOPS

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- **BATHURST / STEELES** Luxurious corner unit, approx 1,300 sq ft, 2 bdrms, solarium / fam rm combo, **$319,000.**
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155 Marlee Ave. $289,000
360 Ri[illegible] $175,000
244 Bet[illegible]m Dr. $575,000
2 Hoyle Ave. $479,000

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M3B 3K4
Don't forget to put the Box Number on your envelope.
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280 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations! Winners of Na'amat Canada's Daily Calendar Lottery Draw for Jan. 2009: Marsha Rovan, Sara Birdie Ratney, Dora Erlich, Jack & Dora Haik, Barbara Grossman, Charlotte Wexler, Andre Fischbach, Judy Mandel, Freda Band, Noga Schwartz, Malka-Leah Shainhouse, Eva Goldberg, Shirley Goodman, Gail Bowman, Goldie Berger, Sheine Mankovsky, Gloria Tenenbaum, Sandy Rybak, Evelyn Shecter, Carolyn Ekstein, Shirley Korenblum, Francey Sager, Abe Gitalis, Yael Shaffir, Shirley Train, K & D Brown, Linda Mandlsohn, Ester Rine, Toby Levy, Audrey Shecter, S. Hershkop.

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European Jews urge EC to denounce anti-Semitism

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The umbrella organization representing European Jewry is calling on the European Parliament to do more to stem the alarming rise in anti-Semitism from Britain to Lithuania.

The European Parliament ought "to pass a resolution that openly condemns anti-Semitism in general and the latest wave in particular," said Moshe Kantor, president of the European Jewish Congress (EJC). "The European Parliament has a responsibility to condemn these acts because they are phenomena that have no place in 'our modern European community of values.' We are strongly urging the European Parliament to pass a resolution along these lines, to stop stalling because of political reasons, to separate what is happening in the Middle East from what is happening in the streets of Europe."

Moshe Kantor

European Jews have increasingly come under attack, with the number of anti-Semitic incidents in 2009 already half the number for all of 2008. The occurrences range from shouts of "death to the Jews" at anti-Israel rallies to serious physical assaults. The EJC reports that in Antwerp, a home with 12 children was set on fire. No one was hurt in the attack. In Odense, Denmark, a Dane of Palestinian origin shot two Israelis at a shopping mall where they were working, while in Finland, the Green party was accused of anti-Semitism for comparing the Star of David to a swastika. In Florence, a bomb was found at the city's Chabad House, while synagogues in Amsterdam, Arnhem and Haaksbergen, The Netherlands, were subject to arson attempts.

Anti-Semitic incidents in the United Kingdom have been particularly rampant, with 220 occurrences reported from Dec. 27, 2008, to Jan. 19, 2009. They included 10 assaults and 50 anti-Semitic daubings, as well as threats to individual Jews and organizations.

Kantor said the lessons of the Holocaust have not been learned in Europe. "This situation today is worse than it's been in decades," he said in an e-mail interview. "Jews feel extremely unsafe and feel that little is done to prevent this. We have witnessed an alarming rise of anti-Semitism in the last month, due in part to the situation in Gaza. We must not forget these phenomena are against common European values, those that helped establish the European Union. The fight against anti-Semitism in Europe is a constant one. We've made much progress, yet it persists."

Kantor was gratified by the position taken by EU President Hans-Gert Pottering, who expressed solidarity with European Jewry during International Holocaust Remembrance Day on Jan. 27. In addition to "paying homage to all the victims of the Shoah," in a letter to Kantor, Pottering stated: "On this anniversary, we are also called upon to speak out clearly and reject any instances of anti-Semitism and intolerance in our own countries in our own time. The European Parliament has consistently taken a strong stance against racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. These are phenomena which have no place in our modern European community of values. They are a threat to our belief in a European Union whose cornerstone is respect for human dignity of each and every human being."

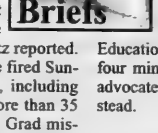
Kantor said that the EU president "cannot force the political groups to pass resolutions, only set the tone. In this light, we are very disappointed with certain political groups in Parliament that have completely sidelined the question, because they consider it to be politically incorrect to mention anti-Semitism in Europe when so many have died in Gaza. To us, this amalgam is not only unnecessary, but conceptually wrong. Jewish individuals, businesses and places of worship in Europe deserve attention and recognition as well."

Kantor said that "parliamentarians and parliamentary groups do not want to be seen as insensitive toward Palestinians by recognizing anti-Semitism in Europe... We completely reject this idea that one can not speak out against anti-Semitism because of fears that it will be offensive to certain people. This notion itself is a major problem."

Israel Briefs

Israel responds to rockets

Israeli air strikes struck several targets in southern Gaza in response to rocket fire on Israel. Monday morning's strikes were aimed at two Hamas outposts, according to the Israel Defence Forces. Palestinian sources said a member of Islamic Jihad was injured and later died. The military denied the report, saying the man didn't sustain his injuries at the time of the attack, Ha'aretz reported. Two Qassam rockets were fired Sunday on Israel from Gaza, including one that hit Ashkelon. More than 35 rockets, mortar shells and Grad missiles have been fired at Israel since Israel and Hamas declared unilateral ceasefires after Israel's Gaza operation. The rocket attacks and responses continued as Arab media reported progress was being made on both an 18-month ceasefire and a prisoner swap for kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit.



$162M for new PM's residence

Israel's cabinet approved $162 million to build a new official prime minister's residence in Jerusalem. The design approved Sunday included an official residence, meeting rooms and offices, as well as venues for the Supreme Court and the Knesset. The aim is to save money on renting space throughout the city for offices and on shuttling the prime minister from his residence to his office. Education Minister Yuli Tamir, one of four ministers who rejected the plan, advocated building classrooms instead.

Turkey, Israel mend fences

Some Israeli and Turkish officials said relations remain good after a public falling-out Jan. 29 between the countries' leaders. "We give special importance to our bilateral ties with Israel and we want to preserve ties with that country," Cemil Cicek, Turkey's deputy prime minister, said last week. "We are now looking toward the future." Ha'aretz reported that top officials of both countries were meeting to calm tensions. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan stormed off stage Jan. 29 at a panel at an economic forum in Davos, Switzerland. He had said during the panel that Israel must deal with Hamas, the terror group that controls Gaza, in the wake of the recent Gaza war, launched after Hamas ended a ceasefire. Israeli President Shimon Peres asked how Turkey would deal with a terror group attacking its people with rockets. Erdogan tried to answer but was cut off by the mediator. He accused Israel of "barbarianism" and left.

Israel to keep its A1 credit rating

Israel is capable of withstanding the recent shocks to its economy – including the Gaza war, a leading credit rater said. In a January report on Israel, Moody's said it won't change its relatively high A1 rating it gave Israel last April.

–with files from JTA

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Canadian wins Masters golf tournament in Israel

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Special to The CJN

WINNIPEG — Former Winnipeger Ron Solomon pulled off what he calls an "unexpected" victory in the master's division of the Israel Open, held recently at the Gaash Golf Club.

Solomon, who made aliyah some 2-1/2 years ago, won in the over-50 age group, where he competed against 40 other participants.

"It felt great winning the tournament," Solomon said in an e-mail interview. "Before the tournament, there was a website set up with predictions on how players might finish, and my name wasn't even mentioned, as not many people knew me. Now I'm getting phone calls from people asking me to join them for a game. It seems I've earned some respect in golf circles."

"Although there are some other tournaments [in Israel] throughout the year, this was the big one," Solomon added.

As a result of his victory, Solomon, 57, is currently "playing golf two or three times a week, which is considerably more than before I won the Israeli Open." The Gaash Golf Club is located on Kibbutz Gaash, about 15 kilometres north of Tel Aviv on the Mediterranean Sea.

Solomon, while working as an elementary and high school teacher in Winnipeg, enjoyed golf as a hobby and tried to learn whatever he could about the game. Shortly after moving to Israel, he landed a job teaching the sport to children, ages eight to 17, at the Caesarea Golf & Country Club.

"I haven't really played in many tournaments before, and this was my first one in Israel. The only other tournament I ever won was the club championship at Winnipeg's Glendale Golf and Country Club, but that was back in 1989," he said.

Solomon said he hopes to play for Israel's golf team in the master's division in the Maccabiah Games in July.

"Winning this tournament gives me a good chance to make the team. There are three qualifying rounds to make the team. One was in January, another in February and the third in March or April. These qualifying rounds don't have as much merit in making the Maccabiah team, since the Israel Open was the main qualifying tournament. But I'll practise two or three times a week prior to these qualifying games," Solomon said.

"There are also some international tournaments throughout the year in which I would be interested in playing. If I am fortunate enough to make the Israeli team, I could play in them, as they are generally team events."

Ron Solomon

Solomon noted that he won the Israel Open "after finishing two shots better than the person who finished second," Leslie Ben Amir.

He attributed his victory to "a few key shots in the last nine holes.

"Probably the turning point was on the 145-yard 13th hole. I was three shots behind at that point, and the leader got up and hit his shot 2-1/2 feet from the hole. I hit next and put my ball three feet from the hole. I made my putt for a birdie and he missed his.

"Another key shot was on the 17th hole. We were tied at that point, and I sank a 25-foot birdie putt, which put me up by one shot with only one hole to go. I hit an excellent shot on the 185-yard, par-three 18th hole to clinch the victory," he said.

As a result of his Open victory, Solomon may start offering golf lessons to adults. "But right now, I'm happy teaching kids," he said.

When asked how he celebrated his victory, Solomon answered, "I had a beer with my cousin David, who was walking with me during the last nine holes. Of course, I called my wife Michal and kids to tell them the good news. There was also a very nice banquet that evening where the trophies were presented."

Solomon also said that one of the things he enjoyed about the Israel Open was that "my 11-year-old son, Eytan, was my caddie the first two days of the tournament."

Next year's Israel Open will be played at the newly redone Caesarea golf course, which was designed by legendary course designer Pete Dye. The Maccabiah Games are also scheduled to be played on the Caesarea course.

"That course will prove to be a much tougher challenge to all the golfers than the course at Gaash," Solomon said.

Super Bowl culture takes root in Israel

By STEVE KLEIN
© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — If you had been among Gadi Gadot's 100 guests at his Super Bowl party that ran into early last Monday morning, you might have been surprised by what you heard – Hebrew. The festivities and excitement among the crowd indicate that the culture of American football is taking root in Israel.

"About 80 per cent were [sabras]," said Gadot, referring to native-born Israelis. The party, the sixth in a row he has held, included a broad mix of participants. Some were members of an Internet football fan forum, which is strictly in Hebrew, plus players in the Israel Football League (IFL) and their friends.

The festivities have been held in the same Ramat Hachayal restaurant (in the Tel Aviv area) for the past four years, though Gadot, 48, points out "it's not about the place but the group."

Forum members, who made up about half the party, "know each other from their nicknames but don't know the faces." The party is the one time a year they get to see "how each other looks in real life."

While other get-togethers around the country favoured one team, most notably a Pittsburgh Steeler party in Kfar Sava, the crowd in Ramat Hachayal, according to Gadot, displayed no particular loyalty.

Many leaned toward the Steelers, probably because the AFC champs had more support in Israeli NFL fantasy leagues.

As the game went on, "sympathy for what Arizona accomplished grew," but in the end most were happy to see Pittsburgh win, Gadot said.

Gadot, who is part of IFL management, can't recall how he got attracted to the U.S. sport, only that he found it "a clever game where you need strategy and tactics." He said he wants to promote the culture of the game to show people it's not just a game for television, but a sport they can watch right here in Israel.

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Caring from a distance

By MICHAEL GORDON

The Senior Side of Life

It's a familiar theme. When I speak to a child of one of my patients, he or she will mention the other siblings who live "away."

It is a common phenomenon in North America that we have become increasingly mobile, and families often separate over the years. I am one of those children who have lived far away from my parents and sister most of my life: first during my studies in Scotland, then during my internship and residencies in Boston and Montreal, and then during my four years living in Israel.

When I settled in Toronto, my parents were relieved that they were only a 10- or 12-hour drive away, and about the same distance from my sister, who lived in Chicago.

As each of my parents declined in health over the years, the distance became more burdensome. After my mother's death, my father was alone in Brooklyn and gradually failing. My sister and I did our best to attend to his needs. Ultimately, however, it became clear that a move to be close to one of us was necessary. He chose Chicago.

Since then, my sister has been the "it" sibling assuming the role of primary care provider, and I am the back-seat quarterback, trying to be available for advice and input, as well as periodic social visits and occasional urgent health-related trips.

In one of my clinics, I had two occasions where the "it" daughter expressed frustration at having her distant-but-loving siblings trying to second-guess and often be critical of her decision-making.

In one case, it was a brother and in the other a sister, who, away from the cauldron of challenge, potential conflicts and enormous calls on time and energy, were quite critical – and in one instance dismissive – of the "it" sibling's decisions about care arrangements.

"My sister thinks I'm exaggerating. She doesn't believe mom is at risk living alone and says I should just tell her to stop calling me 10 times a day. She saw her about seven months ago on a weekend visit and thought she was just fine – maybe a little repetitive, but that did not impress her as meaning anything serious. She could not understand that mom would call 10 minutes after a phone conversation and ask the same question, sometimes five times in an hour."

The other complaint I heard was similar: "My brother does not think mom has dementia. He does not like me even to mention the word. He keeps telling me I have to find better ways to cope. I am struggling with my own family, two teenaged children and my husband who has been ill, and my brother and sister are happy to call and be critical of everything I do."

This scenario is very common, and I recall being in situations where as my sister described what she was contending with, I could see myself slipping into my "expert" role and trying to give advice that was, in fact, off base, as I was hundreds of miles away. I learned that when advice was sought, I would give it, but always frame it as an affirmation of who she was, what her commitment and role were, and how being the "it" caregiver, her perspective was the most important one.

In practice, I always try to offer to meet with siblings who are out of town, to help resolve conflict and focus the family's efforts on their parent's primary care provider and treat their sister or brother with respect. Children who live at a distance must find ways to support siblings who are carrying out the family's collective responsibility, especially when they are playing their role in long-distance mode.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents *(Dundurn Press).*

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Epi on Education

I was recently invited to a very special video conference at Bialik Hebrew Day School at which two scientists at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem spoke to the older grades about the Dead Sea Scrolls. This was preparation for the treat that Toronto will have in June when a rare exhibition of the scrolls will be mounted at the Royal Ontario Museum. Now that I have given three wonderful institutions a plug, let me proceed with the real message of this column.

Seymour Epstein

I was taken by the central motif of the talk, which was to show how the scrolls are but one way to communicate our most precious literature and values in a long chain of media and techniques that we, as a people, have used over the centuries of Jewish life. From early cuneiform in clay to ancient early letters on papyrus, we progressed with new technologies through scrolls on parchment to codices (books), then to printing at the end of the 15th century, ending up for now at something like this website: www.imj.org.il/shrine_center/Isaiah_Scrolling/index.html.

It's precisely because we so valued our texts, and the law and lore within them, that we immediately embraced new media in order to best communicate from one generation to the next and across all geographic borders. One detail of the 15th and 16th centuries is fascinating: printing presented different kinds of challenges to Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Christians saw the great advantage in moveable type and started to print sacred texts. In fact, the layout of our page of Talmud was designed by Daniel Bomberg, a Christian.

Islam turned its back on printing, deciding that the Qur'an was too holy to be printed by a machine. It continued to write its sacred texts in beautiful calligraphy. While the Qur'an was later printed from whole plates, the first moveable type printing of the Qur'an was in the 20th century.

Jews took an interesting middle path in becoming some of the first printers in Europe while maintaining the sacredness of the Torah by keeping the hand-written scroll for ritual reading in the synagogue. It's yet another illustration of how we both revered the past and respected the future.

Epi (Seymour Epstein) is the vice-president of Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Are we taking care of our own?

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

Anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment are very much alive and well. The invasion of Gaza has made this abundantly clear.

Throngs of articles, videos and statements have been sent back and forth between us, each one worse than the other, reflecting the hateful and vile thoughts of anti-Semites, including comparisons of Israeli activities in Gaza to those of Hitler and his henchmen.

The odious people who write this stuff figure they're hitting us where it hurts.

One example is a response I received to one of my YouTube postings – titled My Enemies: I Am a Jew – in which a man writes: "America is not going to babysit Israel forever. Sooner or later, the Nazi cancer of Israel will be destroyed. Israel's destruction, with God's help, will happen. Death to Israel."

The war in Gaza has brought out the worst in people who abhor us and want to destroy Israel.

The question that needs to be addressed, therefore, is what are we doing as a community to ensure that we're safe, and that every member feels equipped to defend themselves both verbally and physically?

A friend of mine told me that when he was in high school during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, a buddy of his was beaten up after school by thugs yelling "Dirty Jew." Feeling the need to take action, every day after school for weeks, he (my friend) and two of his companions would go to the bus stop where the boy was beaten up and stand guard to make sure such a thing didn't happen again. We were taking care of our own.

I have spoken to many Jews who tell me about days not so long ago when Jewish community members in Toronto, during difficult times, volunteered to watch out for fellow community members and kept an eye on cemeteries and other institutions – a Jewish community watch, if you will.

They tell me that Jews volunteered en masse to walk in the cold of Canadian winter nights to protect us – to take care of our own.

There was once a grassroots movement for self-defence here in Toronto, and an appreciation of what that meant. Over the years, we've institutionalized security so that a handful of Jewish community workers are responsible for liaising with police and dealing with anti-Semites. While they do an excellent job, I believe this has been a mistake. It's not enough, and it reflects the all-too-comfortable position we have adopted as Jews in the Diaspora. Toronto is a relatively safe place to live for Jews, but Gaza reminds us that there's cause for concern, and many opportunities calling out to all of us to pitch in.

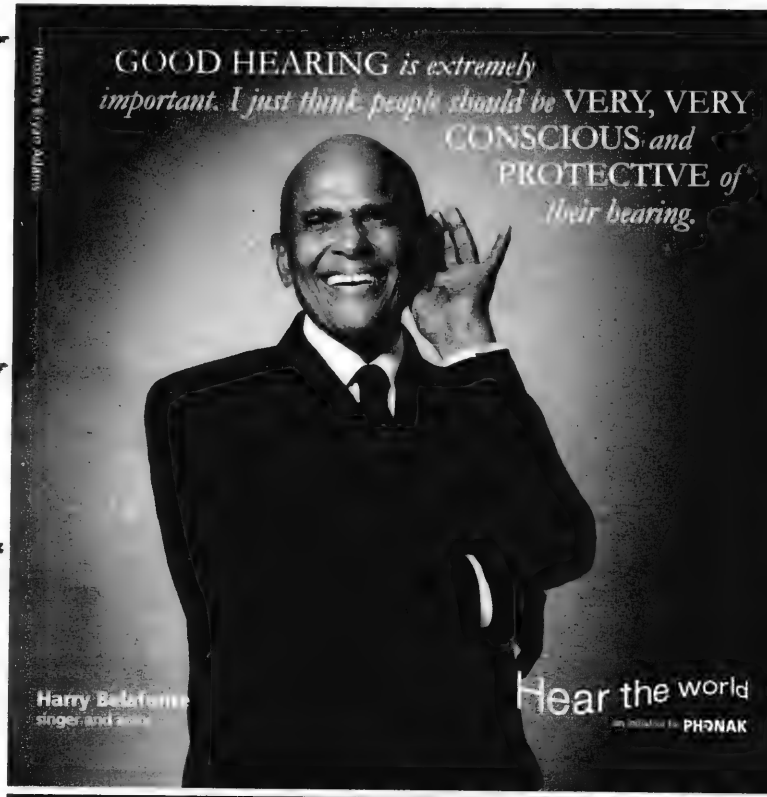
In our community of close to 200,000 Jews, we have within us the ability to develop teams of community volunteers who can march hand in hand with our university students (who are definitely on the front lines of anti-Semitism); watch our schools, shuls and cemeteries; learn how to fight, using words or otherwise, and stand at a bus stop early in the morning or late at night if a kid asks us for protection.

I, therefore, ask you to forward me your name and e-mail address if you are interested in being part of such a movement. I ask organizations that have the ability and interest to oversee such Jewish self-defence units to e-mail me and ask for these names. I will forward them to you.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, the renowned philosopher and Jewish activist, criticized the Jewish people of his generation for being inactive when bold activism was called for. Today, after Gaza, we have the flexibility, ingenuity, resources and strength to take care of our own.

Let's not allow the same to be said about our generation!

Avrum@veahavta.org. Sudan?


GOOD HEARING is extremely important. I just think people should be VERY, VERY CONSCIOUS and PROTECTIVE of their hearing.
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This Week

National

UJA campaign close to reaching last year's tally. *Page 3*

Many Muslims don't recognize Israel's right to exist. *Page 14*

Brides

Helpful tips for that special day. *Section B*

Arts & Travel

Adele painting saga is focus of documentary. *Page 34*

On cjnews.com

Students learn about immigration in Israel.

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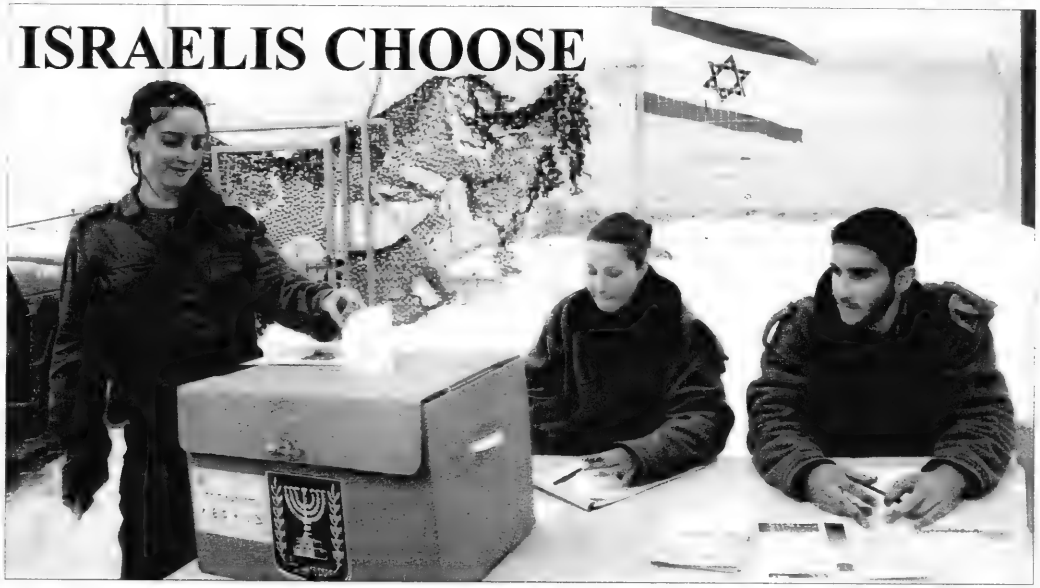

Israeli soldiers stationed on Mount Hermon in the Golan Heights voted a day before the public in Israel's general elections. When all the votes were finally tallied, Kadima emerged with a one-seat victory over Likud. As The CJN went to press on Feb. 13, Israeli President Shimon Peres had yet to call upon one of the leading parties to try to form a coalition. For more election news and analysis, please see pages 8, 9, 11, 27, 28
[Avihu Shapira/Israel Sun photo]

Students under 'siege' at York U

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

York University has been a hotbed of anti-Israel activity for years, but "the siege" against Jewish students on campus of late is more intense than ever before, says Aaron Rosenberg, co-president of Hasbara at York.

Within the past two weeks, a Jewish student at York received a death threat against him and his family, while another Jewish student was allegedly assaulted by a member of an anti-Israel campus group. In two other incidents, a mob chanting anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist slurs trapped Jewish students inside the campus Hillel lounge, and an anti-Israel rally was held in Vari Hall rotunda.

Most recently, on Feb. 12, the rally against Israel, organized by Students Against Israel Apartheid (SAIA), attracted some 150 to 200 students who urged York President Mamdouh Shoukri to "fully endorse a public forum on an academic boycott of Israel" and to sever all ties with Israel.

The protesters, who were told to dress all in black in solidarity with Gazans, chanted slogans such as "Free, free Palestine" and "Who's campus? Our campus."

Rosenberg said Jewish students are tired of being bullied by anti-Israel groups that intimidate people who don't support them, and they responded by staging a counter-protest that attracted nearly 200 students.

York student Annie Gamliel said the latter group's message was one of peace.

"The rally was huge. It was very well maintained. There was a lot of York security and the Israel side made sure they had one, very clear message," she said.

"We were singing, we were chanting, 'Drown out the hate with peace.' They were saying, 'Who's campus? Our campus.' We were saying, 'Who's campus? Everyone's campus.'"

Rosenberg was happy about how well Jewish campus groups worked together.

Continued on page 18

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Holocaust denial intolerable, Pope says – please see page 29

The News in Brief

CANADA

Cotler Raises Flags

OTTAWA — Liberal MP Irwin Cotler said he hopes the election of a new Bangladeshi prime minister will end the "unjust prosecution" of a pro-Israel Muslim journalist who was jailed for spying after trying to attend a writer's conference in Tel Aviv. In a meeting earlier this month with Bangladesh's high commissioner to Canada, the former justice minister said he's "deeply concerned" by accusations of blasphemy, treason and sedition against Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, who fosters interfaith dialogue among Muslims, Jews and Christians. Choudhury has been in solitary confinement for more than a year and faces the death penalty if convicted, said Cotler, who is Choudhury's international counsel.

WORLD

Police Arrested

CARACAS — Seven police officers were among 11 people arrested for involvement in an attack on a Venezuelan synagogue. One of the arrested men is said to be a guard at the shul. In last month's attack on the Tiferet Israel Sephardi synagogue in Caracas, vandals damaged Torah scrolls and painted epithets such as "death to the Jews" on the shul's walls. A roster of member families was also stolen. Critics say the attack was fuelled by anti-Semitic rhetoric from Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez that grew increasingly strident during Israel's Gaza operation. Chavez broke diplomatic ties with Israel on Jan. 6, during the war, expelling its ambassador and embassy staff.

Church Divests

LONDON — The Church of England divested from the U.S. firm Caterpillar. The move, announced last week, took place in December, the Church said. The announcement said the $3.3-million move was made for purely economic, not political or ethical, reasons, though the Church has long been urged to divest due to the firm's involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It came just before the Guardian newspaper published a letter from some clergy condemning the Church's "unethical" investment policy. Caterpillar sells bulldozers to Israel that are used in house demolitions in the West Bank and Gaza.

Shul Bomber Jailed

LONDON — A former Al Qaeda member was sentenced to 18 years in jail for his part in the 2002 bombing of a Tunisian shul. A Paris court ruled Feb. 5 that Christian Ganczerski, a German convert to Islam, helped kill 21 people when he gave the signal to bomb an ancient monument and synagogue in Djerba. Most of the dead were European tourists. Prosecutors had asked for a 30-year sentence and tried to show he had ties to senior Al Qaeda terrorists. The brother of the man who rammed himself and a fuel tanker packed with explosives into the Djerba shul also got 12 years in jail for helping carry out the attack.

Reports Denounced

MOSCOW — The head Chabad rabbi of Azerbaijan denounced reports of orchestrated attacks on Jews. Rabbi Meir Bruk said reports by the PanArmenian news agency were an effort to drive a wedge between Israel and Azerbaijan. On Feb. 11, the agency reported that several apartments where Jewish families live in the coastal town of Sumgait had been robbed and their residents attacked.

Al-Jazeera English Coming to Canada?

VANCOUVER — The Canadian managing director of Al-Jazeera's English service says the Qatar-based news channel could be available in this country later this year.

Tony Burman, former editor-in-chief of CBC News, said a Canadian cable firm will soon apply to the CRTC, the broadcast regulator, for permission to carry the channel. He was in Canada last week on a panel marking the 10th anniversary of the University of British Columbia's journalism school, the Vancouver Sun reported.

Burman said it's ironic the service isn't available in Canada, partly for political reasons, when it's available in Israel and interviews Israeli leaders and officials.

Al-Jazeera has been criticized for airing Islamist and virulently anti-Semitic content. Earlier this month, British lawmakers condemned it for broadcasting a controversial Muslim cleric's sermon in Arabic that celebrated the Holocaust and prayed for the killing of all Jews.

Sheik Yusuf al-Quaradawi, who hosts the popular program Shariah and Life on Al-Jazeera's Arabic-language service, described the Shoah as "divine punishment" and prayed to Allah to kill Jews "down to the very last one."

John Whittingdale, head of the House of Commons media select committee, called on Al-Jazeera to apologize and to ban al-Quaradawi from appearing in the future. But the network refused to apologize, claiming it can't control the content of live broadcasts.

Jews Rally

JOHANNESBURG — Israel supporters rallied in Johannesburg in response to an illegal anti-Israel protest. The Feb. 6 anti-Israel rally was held by the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the Palestinian Solidarity Committee outside a Jewish community centre in a densely populated Jewish residential area. Johannesburg City Council had denied the groups permission to hold the rally protesting the South African Jewish community's pro-Israel stance. Some 100 protesters gathered by the centre, where they were countered by 300 members of Jewish groups in an organized counter rally behind the centre's security gate. Police were present to prevent violence. "We draw the line at such demonstrations in our schools and neighbourhoods," said Avrom Krengel, head of the South African Zionist Federation. Several schools closed for safety.

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UJA campaign closes with $61 million raised

Finally tally expected to come close to last year's total

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto's 2009 campaign has raised $61 million to date – less than last year's total of $66 million and well short of its $70-million goal.

The amount was announced at last week's UJA campaign closing event, held at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue.

But Howard English, a spokesperson for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, told The CJN after the event that organizers expect the final donation tally to come close to or match last year's total.

With the economic downturn, organizers realized that their original goal was unrealistic, English said.

Although no new goal was announced, he added, "we determined that if we could match last year's amount, we'd be doing exceedingly well."

English said that donors from last year who have yet to contribute could make up the shortfall. "In the past, our anticipated total, beyond the official total, has been pretty accurate."

Although he expressed confidence that UJA would reach $66 million, he said that in the event of a shortfall – especially in light of increased needs in the community because of the economy – "our goal is to preserve the core services that we fund, and to ensure that needs are cared for.

"There are some internal cost savings that we're looking at."

Keynote speaker Miri Eisen, an Israeli government spokesperson, thanked audience members for their support of Israel.

"The Jewish world… is an integral part of our own strength," Eisen said.

Continued on page 7

Miri Eisen addresses UJA campaign closing event

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One hundred years ago

From the editor's desk...

As of this writing, two days after the general election in Israel, every political pundit and commentator of every media outlet in the Diaspora is offering an opinion on the results.

Inter-party (and even intra-party) bargaining and bartering have begun. We must now await the results of this next, somewhat unseemly phase in the Israeli electoral system.

Without new or wiser insights to add than those that have already been written, spoken, shouted or sighed since the balloting, I write this week about an important anniversary for Canadian Jewry that must not go unnoticed.

One hundred years ago this month, the remarkable, brilliant, enigmatic but ultimately tragically fated poet, writer, journalist, editorialist, scholar, social activist A. M. Klein was born.

The late literary figure Miriam Waddington, who collected, studied and annotated the entire body of Klein's poetry, wrote that he was born in Montreal on Feb. 14, 1909. Later records indicated, according to Prof. Zailig Pollock of Trent University, Klein's authoritative biographer, that Klein was born in 1909 in Ratno, a small town in Ukraine, and was brought to Montreal with his family, probably the following year.

The mist surrounding his place of birth matches somewhat the mist regarding the latter period of his life. For reasons that are still not clear, Klein fell into a deep depression in the mid-1950s that silenced his pen until his death in 1972.

But for a quarter century, Klein was the most inspiring writer and thinker among Canadian Jewry.

He lived his entire life in Montreal, chronicling, through elegant prose and fine poetry, Jewish life there and its many intersections with the people and folkways of Quebec. His volume of poems, The Rocking Chair and Other Poems, received the Governor-General's prize in 1948.

Nearly four decades after his death, Klein is remembered today mostly among literary circles and especially appreciated for his affinity for and mastery of language. "Skilful" hardly describes Klein's deft ability to shape and create images through his inventive yet devoted use of words. He was accomplished in English, Hebrew, French and Latin.

But the main reason I make note of the anniversary is to recall or introduce to readers that Klein was a courageous, unflinching champion on behalf of the Jewish people and our causes. He was, in short, an example of the type of bold, spirited, but thoughtful defender of Jews and the Jewish cause that we need today.

In the magisterial collection of Klein essays and editorials (A.M. Klein, Beyond Sambation, edited by M.W. Steinberg and Usher Caplan, University of Toronto Press, 1982) Steinberg wrote that Klein's greatest journalistic concern "was over the increasing manifestation of anti-Semitism, discriminatory and violent, in eastern and central Europe... He appealed to the moral conscience of western nations and was deeply outraged at the relative indifference shown by the so-called liberal democratic nations of the western world to the plight of the victims... The moral apathy of the world at large distressed him."

Klein was also a very proud and impassioned elucidator of Jewish values and traditions.

Among the many examples of this aspect of his soul, I reproduce one of the poems that he wrote in the early 1940s, called Heirloom.

My father bequeathed me no wide estates;
No keys and ledgers were my heritage;
Only some holy books with *yahrzeit* dates
Writ mournfully upon a blank front page -

Books of the Baal Shem Tov, and of his wonders;
Pamphlets upon the devil and his crew;
Prayers against road demons, witches, thunders;
And sundry other tomes for a good Jew.

Beautiful: though no pictures on them, save
The scorpion crawling on a printed track;
The Virgin floating on a scriptural wave;
Square letters twinkling in the Zodiac.

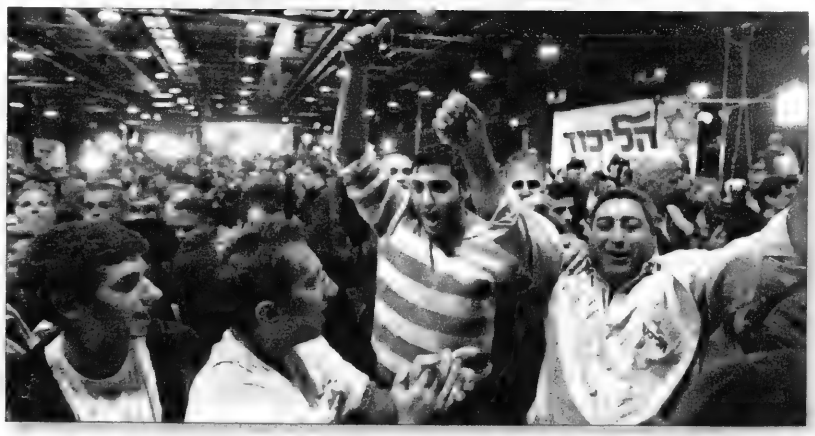
The snuff left on this page, now brown and old,
The tallow stains of midnight liturgy -
These are my coat of arms, and thus unfold
My noble lineage, my proud ancestry!

And my tears, too, have stained this heir-loomed ground,
When reading in these treatises some weird
Miracle, I turned a leaf and found
A white hair fallen from my father's beard.

The 100th anniversary of the birth of A. M. Klein is an important occasion for the Jews of Canada. In recalling the man and reflecting upon his work on behalf of his people, we are reminded of what our own work must be today.

-MBD

SeeJN



TIME TO CELEBRATE: Likud activists at the Tel Aviv exhibition grounds celebrate party's good fortune on election night last week. The party won 27 seats, second to Kadima's 28, but is in a strong position heading into coalition negotiations. **[Israel photo]**

UJA says thank you to volunteers at Campaign closing

Campaign 2009 coming close to last year's record-breaking total

By Daniel Horowitz

More than 250 members of Toronto's Jewish community made their way to Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue last week as United Jewish Appeal celebrated the close of its annual campaign.

The evening gave campaign organizers an opportunity to thank the community for supporting UJA's Campaign 2009, while paying tribute to the more than 1,000 committed volunteers who lent their talents to the campaign in a variety of ways.

Despite these challenging economic times, the campaign - chaired by Fran Sonshine and Henry Wolfond - has already reached $61 million, and when the final numbers are in for the year, UJA expects to come very close to last year's record-breaking total of $66 million.

Prominent Israeli spokesperson, Colonel Miri Eisin addresses the crowd.

Those attending the celebration received an insider's perspective from retired IDF Colonel and prominent Israeli spokesperson Miri Eisin, who shared her views on the Gaza conflict, the results of the Israeli election, and how Barack Obama's presidency will affect the United States' relationship with Israel.

Entertainment was provided by Dr. Arthur Benjamin, the man *Reader's Digest* calls America's best math whiz.

"When Henry and I first took the reigns last year at this time, we had no idea what the future held," Sonshine told the audience. "We couldn't have known that we would be faced with a worldwide economic crisis, or that Israel would retaliate after eight years of Hamas rocket attacks. And, we also couldn't have known what a powerful and rewarding experience this year would turn out to be."

"With all of this happening in the world around us, our community came together like never before," said Wolfond. "As the economy declined, the people who rely on UJA dollars the most needed your support more than ever, and you were there."

Celebrating the community closing of United Jewish Appeal's Campaign 2009 at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue last week are Campaign chairs Henry Wolfond (l), Fran Sonshine (2nd from right), chair of Women's Campaign & Advocacy, Lisa Draper (far right) and UJA Federation president & CEO Ted Sokolsky (2nd from left).

A number of UJA volunteers received awards over the course of the evening, including father and son telethon veterans Donald and Richard Bennett who, together, raised more than $1.5 million by simply letting their fingers do the walking.

Their talents, combined with the direction of Telethons chair David Weinberg and hundreds of volunteers, helped telethons raise almost $4.8 million towards Campaign 2009, an impressive 29 percent increase over last year's telethon results.

Recipients of the Platinum Dialer award, father and son telethon team Richard (l) and Donald Bennett display their winning technique.

Community leaders Howard Sokolowski and Fred Waks received special mention for their roles as catalysts of UJA's Israel@60 Challenge Fund. As driving forces behind securing many of the 25 Challenge Fund gifts, Campaign 2009 brought in an extra $1.5 million. Just as importantly, more than 130 increased gifts from other donors qualified for matching from the total Challenge Fund pool of $1.5 million, for a net effect of $3 million.

"Few chairs and campaign leaders, in their respective roles, have been so involved, so active, and so personally dedicated to the success of the campaign as Fran, Henry, Women's Campaign & Advocacy chair Lisa Draper, and the chair of campaign operations, Sherry Firestone," said UJA Federation Board chair David Koschitzky. "As mentioned, this year has seen its share of highs and lows, but no matter what came their way, these leaders faced it head on and prevailed."

Koschitzky went on to introduce the incoming chairs of Campaign 2010, Debbie Kimel and Ken Tanenbaum, as well as Andrea Cohen, incoming chair of Women's Campaign and Lisa Draper as incoming chair of campaign operations.

"What a year and what a great campaign," reflected Ted Sokolsky, UJA president and CEO. "Led by the passionate and tireless efforts of Fran Sonshine, Henry Wolfond, Lisa Draper and Sherry Firestone, the message resonated within Jewish Toronto that when times are tough, those who rely on UJA Federation and our partner agencies need us more than ever. I couldn't be prouder of our supporters across this great community, our volunteers, and our entire campaign leadership."

Photos by Rachel Verbin

Dr. Arthur Benjamin, "The Mathemagician", wows a volunteer from the audience with his numerical magic.

High-tech Israeli companies make pitch to banking sector

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

There was a time when the Israeli trade commissioner had to spend his time educating Canadian businesspeople about the achievements and potential of Israeli industry, particularly its high-tech sector.

Then, to complicate matters, it turned out that Israeli industry wasn't particularly focused on doing business in Canada.

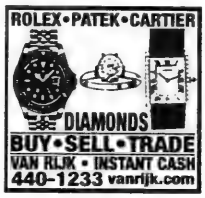
Jonathan Levy

Bringing the two sides together has been a challenge, but there appears to be momentum building in which the two sides increasingly see each other as viable – and profitable – business partners.

Building on that developing relationship, the Israel Economic Mission, which is part of the consulate in Toronto, is hosting a "networking reception" on Feb. 23 and 24 that will bring together 11 Israeli telecom and software companies with Canadian banks, insurance companies, IT businesses and law firms. The event will be held at the Toronto Stock Exchange Gallery and the Ontario Investment & Trade Centre.

Jonathan Levy, Israel's Toronto-based trade commissioner and consul for economic affairs, said the conference will highlight Israeli high-tech solutions for financial institutions.

"We expect something good to come out of this. When you prepare well and bring together the right people from both sides and bring new solutions to the Canadian market to address issues faced here, like compliance, fraud, cutting costs or improving client services, it can be a win-win situation," he said.



Israeli companies are world leaders in a number of areas, while at the same time, "we realize Toronto is an important financial centre. Canada has a successful banking sector, a sector that has been praised for its handling of the financial crisis. They haven't been exposed to Israeli IT solutions."

Financial service industries' "reliance on computer technology is critical, and we want to showcase Israeli solutions that are relevant to banks in Canada," Levy said.

Among the Israeli participants are Actimize, which provides software solutions to protect against money laundering and fraud; Correlsense, which tracks financial transactions; and PerSay Ltd., which is a leader in biometric products used to verify users' identities.

IBM, the giant American technology company, is co-sponsoring the conference. IBM has had a presence in Israel for decades, Levy said, and along with Motorola, it was one of the earliest western companies to see the potential for developing high-tech products in the Jewish state. One of its units identifies promising technological innovations that can be fitted into IBM platforms. Through arrangements with the Israeli partners, it offers those solutions to its vast client base, he said.

Other conference sponsors include the Toronto Stock Exchange, which is eager to list Israeli companies, as well the law firm Fraser Milner Casgrain and Cosmopolitan Toronto Centre.

Levy expects senior people from Canadian banks to attend. "We've built relationships with the banks. We have an advisory board that consists of IT specialists within the financial community in Canada who work with us to realize this initiative."

Last year, the economic mission identified three sectors on which to focus: information technology (IT) and telecom, clean tech and life sciences. To bring Israeli accomplishments in these fields to the attention of Canadian businesses, the mission undertook a number of initiatives. It co-sponsored a joint Ontario/Israeli clean tech workshop; it took part in Globe 2008, Canada's largest environmental business exhibition; it brought 10 Israeli companies to the Canadian Telecom Summit.

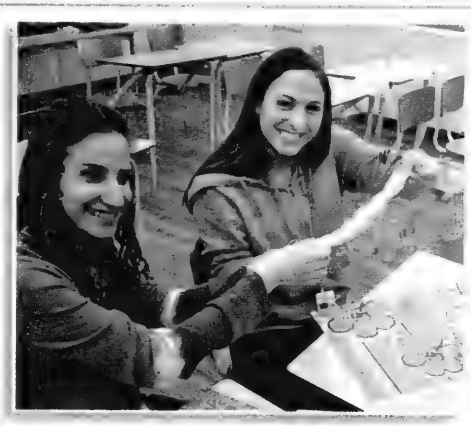
Some of these efforts have borne fruit. Waterloo, Ont.-based Research In Motion (RIM) now applies an Israeli solution to permit its technicians to remotely test electronic devices. Telus employs a system developed by MCE Systems that permits the simple transfer of data, such as address books, from one cellular device to another; and RIM's BlackBerry employs a downloadable application called Worldmate that was developed in Israel.

Canadians are increasingly aware of the quality of high-tech products being developed in Israel, Levy said. Additionally, Israeli firms are looking to Canada to diversify their businesses in the current turbulent financial climate.

"Canada has been off the map for Israeli companies, which concentrated on the United States, Europe and, currently, Southeast Asia. They are learning that Canada is a place of opportunity," Levy said.

Participation was capped at 11 Israeli companies. Others have been turned away.

"It's not a one-time thing," he said. "If it's successful, and I know it's going to be successful, we'll continue in the future with events that highlight Israeli high-tech solutions that are relevant to Canada."



MAKING CHALLAH: Robyn Pikelyn, left, and Maya Lash, students at Northern Secondary, braides challah at a recent Jewish Student Union (JSU) club meeting. The JSU's mission is to get more Jewish teens at public high schools to do Jewish things

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Eisen addresses challenges facing new government

Continued from page 3

Israel has grown and is thriving despite a lack of natural assets such as water, oil, diamonds or coal, and despite having "fought wars that we do not want to fight," she said.

Following last week's election, which was held the day before the Toronto event, Eisen said the three main challenges facing Israel's new government are Iran, the Palestinians and "the future of our domestic social fabric," an issue evident in increased socio-economic gaps.

The retired Israel Defence Forces colonel – who was Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's foreign media adviser until December 2007, and more recently was a senior government spokesperson during Israel's operation in Gaza – said that until 1980, Israel had the smallest gap in the western world between rich and poor, but today it has the largest.

As well, she added, there is a growing gap between Jewish Israelis, who make up 75 per cent of Israel's population, and its Arab Muslims, who form 20 per cent.

She noted that members of the latter group don't call themselves Israeli Arabs. Rather, they consider themselves Palestinian Arabs who have Israeli citizenship.

A third social issue that Eisen raised is the growing gap between Israel's haredi Jews and the 80 per cent of Israeli Jews who are secular, or as she put it, "traditional, non-practising Jews... the synagogue they don't go to is the Orthodox one."

"We need to face these gaps," said Eisen, who made aliyah with her family from California at age eight in 1971. "We're trying to address it on many levels."

Eisen stressed repeatedly that Israel is "modern, western, Middle Eastern, Jewish and a democracy," and that each of those aspects is significant in describing it accurately.

"Most countries would take these gaps and have a pretty full agenda," she said, but Israel also faces "two challenges that are always there and that are not elephants in the room, because we talk about them."

Iran's government has "led the extreme ideology which openly calls for the annihilation of the 'Jewish entity'... and it is trying to achieve nuclear capability. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to put two and two together," Eisen said.

Closer to home, the Palestinian issue needs to be resolved in a way that will ensure Israel remains both a Jewish state and a democracy, she added. "There was a reason we were established as a Jewish state on May 14, 1948... We need, and we yearn for, a resolution with the Palestinians."

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A voting result whose meaning we don't know

Some 65 per cent of eligible Israeli voters cast ballots in the national election last week. By comparison, five months ago in the Canadian elections for Parliament, 59 per cent of eligible voters cast ballots. It was the lowest turnout ever in a Canadian federal election. In November, 61 per cent of eligible American voters found their way to the voting booths in the general election. It was the highest voter showing in the U.S. in 40 years.

By any measure, Israel's democracy is vibrant and vigorous. Israelis are very serious about their politics. They are very fond of parties – a dozen parties elected members to the Knesset last week – but they're very hard on their politicians. They are prepared to travel very far with them through very rough terrain and on every reasonable road, although too often, as we have seen lately and as Israelis have learned, the high road is not where politicians always try to lead them.

But it's hard to know which road and with whom Israelis will travel as a result of last week's election.

The top two parties – Kadima led by Tzipi Livni and Likud led by Benjamin Netanyahu – essentially tied in the number of members each will place in the Knesset, with 28 and 27 respectively. The third-largest party in the chamber will be Yisrael Beiteinu, led by Avigdor Lieberman with 15 members. The fourth-largest party, Labor, led by Ehud Barak, won 13 seats. The fractured line of the remaining eight parties divided the rest of the 37 Knesset seats, from Shas with 11 to Habayit Hayehudi (the Jewish Home), which won three seats.

The next few weeks in Israeli public life will now become a form of daily in-camera shopping, in which offers and bids among potential coalition partners will be rejected or accepted and immediately communicated on camera to an awaiting, but cynical, public.

If it is not presumptuous for a Jew in the Diaspora to suggest, the greatest governmental priority for the State of Israel at this moment in its and in Jewish history is solidity, stability and unity of purpose. And if it is not further presumptuous for a Jew in the Diaspora to suggest, the most effective way to achieve such stability is by a coalition of the three "centrist" parties whose combined Knesset membership would produce an assured majority.

The first order of legislative business for this stable alliance should then be meaningful electoral reform that would forever ensure the ability of future governments in the Knesset to govern and make sound national policy for the benefit of the broad Israeli electorate without special deference to the narrower interests embodied in small, power-wielding parties.

Despite the hodge-podge result last week in Israel whose meaning we don't yet know, we congratulate the Israeli voters for so effusively cherishing and embracing what we do, too: democracy.

25 years ago in The CJN

Israel's problems with human rights stem from its control of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as its policy of establishing settlements there, the U.S. State Department said in its annual report on human rights. It added that while Arabs living in Israel have equal rights under the law, they nevertheless feel powerless and alienated.

Editorials & Letters

Dry Bones
ELECTION REFORM
A "VOTE NO" ELECTION SYSTEM?
EXACTLY!
THE ISRAELI VOTER WOULD PICK WHO TO VOTE AGAINST!
AGAINST?!
WHOEVER GOT THE FEWEST "NO" VOTES WOULD BE DECLARED WINNER BY DEFAULT.
SO WE'D JUST HAVE TO DECIDE WHICH CANDIDATE WAS THE WORST.
ALSO NOT AN EASY JOB!
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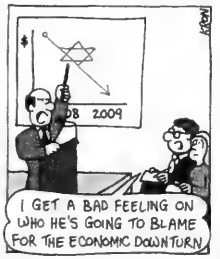
Editorial Advisory Board: Guy Aboodi, Michael Brown, Donald Carr, Gal Corfas, Igor Korenzvit, Keith Landy, Rabbi John Moscowitz, Lou Ronson, Alan Sandler, Rabbi Philip Scheim, Mike Shriqui, Pamela Medjuck Stein, Ehud Teiem , Rabbi Reuven Tradburks, Nelson Wiseman.

Rejection of Yossi Fackenheim's conversion

I was appalled by the article on the rejection of Yossi Fackenheim's conversion by the Jerusalem Rabbinic Court ("Israeli rabbi rejects Toronto conversion," CJN, Feb. 5). This is especially offensive, since Yossi is the son of Emil Fackenheim, who was one the greatest Jewish scholars of the 20th century. But it raises an even more significant issue as background to this ruling – namely that Jewish life is being controlled by the haredi segment of the community. That control is demonstrated by the recent controversy over conversion that was imposed by the Israeli rabbinate covering the rest of world Jewry – an imposition that would nullify the conversions of thousands of other individuals going back many years, as is the case with Yossi.



Here I hark back to the two letters written by Orthodox rabbis in the Jan. 29 issue of CJN, criticizing Rabbi Dov Marmur's article of Dec. 18 ("Say no to the haredim!"). While taking Rabbi Marmur to task over some of his comments, Rabbi Avi Shafran of Agudath Israel of America goes on to state that "we Orthodox cherish all our fellow Jews," but that is conditioned by the "Divine mandate to which all of us are heir." Thus other Jews are just not Jews unless they conform to Rabbi Shafran's criteria.

It's time that Rabbi Shafran and his supporters recognize that Yossi Fackenheim and Rabbi Marmur are just as Jewish as they are. We live in the modern age, when diversity of outlook is essential if the Jewish people are to survive. Let us take that circumstance seriously and allow all our fellow Jews to express their loyalty to their Jewishness as they see fit, and not according to the particular interpretation that the haredim wish to impose on others.

Peter Gilbert
Toronto

* * *

McGill anti-Israel motion

Kol hakavod to McGill University's Jewish and gentile students who did what was right at the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) General Assembly (GA) on Feb. 5 ("Gaza fallout hits Canadian universities: McGill defers motion," CJN, Feb. 12). In a typical propaganda move by those who seek to demonize Israel, a resolution was put forward to the GA to condemn the bombing of schools in Gaza and to condemn Israel for preventing Palestinians from leaving Gaza. For the record, the schools were attacked to destroy rocket factories, and the travel restriction aims to impede the import and export of arms and terrorists. Of course, none of Israel's legitimate security concerns were in the "non-political" resolution.

I was extremely proud to see 450 Israel-supporting students in McGill's Shatner building. Even more impressive was their determination to stick it out until an hour after the event was supposed to be done, despite not knowing initially whether we were in the majority or waiting for an unwinnable vote, and despite biased event management by a SSMU executive who ignored an obvious majority of "no" ballots held up against the anti-Israel resolution.

To all those who helped organize Israel's supporters to show up and make their voices heard, thank you. It helps myself and others feel comfortable and secure on McGill's campuses.

Gabriel Goldenberg
Montreal

* * *

Kellogg program

The Kellogg Management Education for Jewish Leaders program also included the executive directors of three Toronto congregations, because rabbis and administrators work together as a team to advance the overall plans for a synagogue community ("Rabbis hone business skills to deal with changing times," CJN, Jan. 1). Rabbi Chaim Strauchler, Rabbi Michael Dolgin and I were joined by Rayner Conway, executive director of Temple Sinai; Sheldon Maerov, executive director of Beth Tzedec Congregation, and Jessica Pelt, executive director of Shaarei Shomayim.

Plans for the next session of the Kellogg program, from Nov. 29 to Dec. 3, with a new cohort of rabbis and executive directors, are underway. Interested rabbis and executive directors may contact me for more information by calling 416-781-3514, ext. 228.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl
Beth Tzedec Congregation
Toronto

* * *

People search

I am seeking information about my uncle, Fajwel Kupferberg, who is a Holocaust survivor. He was born in Bendin, Poland, in 1927. His parents were Zalman and Hudes Kupferberg. His siblings are Dobra Dora Kupferberg Salzberg (born 1923 and living in the United States); Abram Kupferberg (born 1925 and living in Germany); and Majer Kupferberg. We believe my uncle came to Canada through Pier 21 in Halifax in 1948. Pier 21 does not have any information on him.

Brenda Salzberg-Gindi
Brooklyn, N.Y.
bryna02@aol.com

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Perspectives

Israeli election brings unclear result

By LESLIE SUSSER
JTA

Although all the votes have been counted, it was still not clear (as of The CJN's deadline), who really won the Israeli election.

Tzipi Livni's Kadima emerged as the largest single party, but the right-wing parliamentary bloc, led by Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu, captured the majority of the Knesset seats. Kadima appears to have won 28 seats to the Likud's 27, but altogether the right-wing and religious bloc captured 65 seats in the 120-member Knesset.

At post-election parties Feb. 10, both sides claimed victory.

Indeed, given the mixed result, both Livni and Netanyahu have a chance to become Israel's next prime minister. Like two poker players in a high-stakes game, it could depend on who blinks first.

The strength in Netanyahu's hand is that he has the votes to form a coalition with the hawks, at least some of whom Livni needs to form one made up mostly of doves. The snag for Netanyahu is that he desperately does not want to form a narrow right-wing government that would be isolated on the international stage.

Livni's strength is in the moral victory of her party having won the most seats and the fact that Israel's president, who has the role of designating who gets the first crack at forming a government, almost always gives the leader of the largest party the initial opportunity.

Unfortunately for Livni, the law clearly states that the task should be conferred on the Knesset member with the best chance of success. To determine who that may be, the president is supposed to consult with all the parties represented in parliament. If Netanyahu can keep his bloc together, a majority will recommend him to President Shimon Peres in consultations slated for this week.

Still, the game is far from over.

Livni can pressure Netanyahu by refusing to take part in any government he leads, leaving him only with the right-wingers. Netanyahu can pressure Livni by refusing to join a national unity government she leads, denying her a working majority in parliament. Both sides want a national unity government that cuts across the right-left divide. The standoff is over who leads it.

Yisrael Beiteinu's Avigdor Lieberman could be holding the ace.

With 15 seats, Yisrael Beiteinu is now the third-largest party in the Knesset, ahead of Labor, which won only 13.

Kadima supporters celebrate party's narrow victory. Will the celebration be short-lived though? ***[Israeli photo]***

Although normally counted in the right-wing bloc because of his hard line against terror and harsh statements on Israeli Arabs, Lieberman says he is keeping his options open.

Indeed, on some issues Lieberman could find common ground with Livni. For example, both may favour changing the electoral system and introducing a form of civil marriage in Israel – issues that resonate powerfully among Lieberman's heavily Russian immigrant support base. Lieberman could get more on these issues from Livni, who has no fealty to the religious parties, than from Netanyahu, who is committed to including the Orthodox Shas party in his government.

Shas is adamantly opposed both to electoral reform and civil marriage, which would end exclusive Orthodox religious control over marriage in Israel. During the campaign, Shas spiritual leader Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef described casting a ballot for Lieberman as "a vote for the devil." In his election night speech, Lieberman vowed to get even.

It was significant that Livni's first informal coalition meeting last Wednesday was held with Lieberman. A few hours later, however, the Yisrael Beiteinu leader met with Netanyahu.

When push comes to shove, Lieberman probably would find it difficult to defect from the right-wing bloc to Livni's camp. Most pundits believe that the show of keeping his options open is merely a tactical ploy for Lieberman to get more from Netanyahu – possibly the post of defense minister – in return for eventually supporting the Likud leader. Indeed, Lieberman makes no secret of the fact that he feels part of the "national camp," and that all things being equal, his clear preference would be for a right-wing government.

Another question mark over Lieberman is the fact that he is being investigated on serious fraud allegations. A ban on his serving in certain ministries could complicate coalition negotiations.

So what are the some of the coalition options?

• A narrow right-wing government led by Netanyahu and comprising Likud, Yisrael Beiteinu, Shas, United Torah Judaism, National Union and Jewish Home. This 65-seat coalition would be a stable government, but would not give Netanyahu room to manoeuvre either on the Palestinian or Syrian peace tracks, and likely would be seen by the international community, including the new U.S. administration, as intransigent.

• Lieberman throws his support to Livni, who is able to bring Likud on board for an emergency national unity government for a fixed time period comprising Kadima, Yisrael Beiteinu, Likud and Labor – a total of 83 seats – dedicated to one goal: changing the electoral system. Livni, Netanyahu, Lieberman and Labor's Ehud Barak all said that the uncertain election results have underscored the need for reform.

• Livni blinks first and agrees to serve in a Netanyahu-led national unity government consisting of Likud, Kadima, Yisrael Beiteinu, Shas and the religious National Home Party – 83 seats.

Benjamin Netanyahu celebrates with Likud supporters on election night. ***[Israeli photo]***

• Netanyahu blinks first and agrees to serve in a similar government but with rotation of the prime minister – Livni for two years and then Netanyahu for two years. This is the compromise many pundits think may emerge. It gives Livni a chance to be prime minister and allows Netanyahu to head a government with a degree of peacemaking leeway and greater international legitimacy. This was the model adopted in 1984 by Shimon Peres, then head of the Labor Party, and Likud's Yitzhak Shamir. The difference then was that the two blocs, centre-left and religious-right, were actually tied at 60-60.

Both Livni and Netanyahu would like to bring Labor into a governing constellation, with Barak as defence minister,

Tzipi Livni on election night. ***[Israeli photo]***

given the huge regional challenges Israel faces, especially the Iranian nuclear threat. But because of Labor's poor showing in the elections, the predominant feeling within Labor is that the party should stay in opposition to rebuild.

Given these unprecedented election results, will Israel's leaders be able to build a coalition to meet the country's complex needs – a looming Iranian nuclear threat, terrorist groups armed with rockets on its northern and southern borders, and a potentially crippling economic crisis? Or will they have to agree on terms for changing the electoral system first?

What Livni and Netanyahu do in the next little while could be crucial not only for the short-term, but for Israel's long-term well-being.

Reason for embarrassment

The buildings on the corners of a busy intersection in central Jerusalem have Canadian connections. On one side, the hotel and the shopping mall were designed by the Israeli-Canadian architect Moshe Safdie.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

The building opposite, currently under construction, will resurrect a famous hotel. It's said to be financed by Canadians.

Soon the fourth corner will also have a link to Canada, for its designer is the Canadian-born Frank Gehry. The site has been in the news since the Jerusalem municipality granted it to the Simon Wiesenthal Center for its proposed museum of tolerance. As part of the site is a disused Muslim cemetery, several organizations have protested the choice of venue. However, last October, Israel's Supreme Court allowed the project to go ahead.

One of those in favour of the museum but opposed to its erection on the site is Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the North American Union for Reform Judaism.

He writes: "While winning the legal argument, Wiesenthal has lost the moral one. What is legally permissible may be ethically questionable and religiously offensive. Indeed, there is something perverse and ironic about building a monument to tolerance that will be a permanent source of tension in the region and that undermines mutual respect and trust that tolerance requires."

The Wiesenthal Center has been in existence for more than 30 years, with offices in several cities, including Toronto. Its aim is to teach about the Holocaust, fight anti-Semitism and promote tolerance. Its Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles has earned wide acclaim.

The Center's founder and dean, Rabbi Marvin Hier, has pointed to the legality of the Jerusalem site and stressed the lofty purpose of the enterprise. He has written that human remains found there will be treated with the utmost respect.

Yet Rabbi Yoffie speaks for many of us, for there's something provocative about the project. True, the Muslim Religious Council has ruled that this is an abandoned site, on which building is permitted, and the person who alerted the public may be a notorious anti-Semite and Hamas supporter. But to dismiss others who object, in Rabbi Yoffie's paraphrase, as "Israel bashers and left-wing fanatics" is to engage in intolerant rhetoric that negates the very essence of tolerance.

Though Rabbi Hier cites many supporters – including Canadian MP and human rights advocate Irwin Cotler – there are others who strongly disapprove of the choice of venue. Among them is Prof. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, a former rector of Hebrew University and an expert on the geographical history of Jerusalem. He's reported to have said that building the museum will cause long-term damage to Muslim-Jewish relations.

We can't stop the building, but we have reason to be embarrassed about it.

Sport a scarf for Israel

At university and college campuses across, students rush to their classes, bundled up head to toe in boots, jackets and, in some cases, a very special scarf.

Mahla Shapiro, a student in her second semester at Emily Carr University of Art and Design, has designed a scarf specifically to raise awareness of Israel on Canadian campuses.

Justin Dahan in Ottawa

Shapiro, who took a year off university to study Jewish religion and philosophy in Jerusalem, is passionate about Israel and Jewish advocacy. The idea for the scarf came to her when she realized that something needed to be done about what she described as "a university campus with little care or understanding of the situation in the Middle East."

Deciding on how to raise awareness and support of Israel on her campus wasn't easy. She explained why she opted to design a scarf instead of doing something more traditional.

"I felt flyers get thrown out, and T-shirts are worn only once in public and then to bed, as many feel embarrassed walking on campus two days in a row in the same shirt, but a scarf is ideal. People feel comfortable wearing a scarf every day.

"The weather at the moment calls for a scarf, whether you live in Toronto, Montreal, Halifax or Vancouver, and most importantly, the scarf is worn on the outside to keep warm. It could act as a conversation starter on buses and spark discussion among others on campus or walking throughout urban cities."

Although Shapiro is based in Vancouver, there has been interest in the scarves from all over Canada. They cost $18 each, which mostly covers production costs. Any proceeds will go to Israeli charities.

To get distribution up and running, Shapiro had to get help from Jewish organizations. She explained the process of getting started: "I began working, drawing drafts, and meeting with representatives of different organizations, [such as] Hillel UBC and NCSY Vancouver." With the help of these organizations, the scarves are poised to be hot sellers across Canada.

The Emily Carr student has used the scarf to combine her two passions, Israel and art. And because she considers the scarf to be an important project, she doesn't complain about the many hours of time that she put in designing it, or the increase in her phone bill from networking all over Canada to spread her message.

She said the hardest thing for her wasn't the work, it was deciding what would appear on the scarf, and especially which quotations would have the most prominence and what would have to be left out.

She worked with rabbis and teachers in Israel to learn what type of things could be written or depicted on the scarf according to Jewish law.

But the scarf has more than just words. It also has pictures and designs that relate to Judaism and the Jewish struggle.

The scarf comes on the heels of a new fashion trend: keffiyahs have swept campuses and streets across Canada. Many of them are sold in support of the Palestinians, and now there is a viable option for those who want to sport their own political affiliations in their everyday lives. We have seen the little support that Israel has garnered in the public sphere. You might say that pro-Israel activists face a frigid climate, and this scarf can help them battle the cold conditions.

For people who want to find out more about getting their own scarves, Shapiro has set up a Facebook group called "Scarf In Support of Israel." You can reach her there, and you can proudly support Israel in the cold Canadian winter.

So stay bundled up, and don't forget your scarf.

Amnesia abounds, on all sides

Here we go again. Amnesia abounds. The same stories are repeated over and over. The same self-professed sagas of victimhood are perpetuated ad nauseam for more than 60 years. The same disinformation gushes forth from the twin fountainheads of the Israeli and Palestinian propaganda machines. The same sense endures that this conflict, amid the tragedies in Darfur and Congo today as much as those of Rwanda and Serbia in years gone by, deserves the world's constant attention.

Jesse Mintz in Halifax

What more is there to say? The same articles are published the world over, lamenting the moral bankruptcy implicit in the latest violence perpetuated by both sides and latent in all of their interactions for the past 60 years.

The amnesia is palpable on both sides. Only the other's missteps are remembered, never one's own. And the result of such a process – endless turmoil undisturbed by societal self-reflection – plagues both peoples.

Is the collective Israeli consciousness so myopic that the tough lessons from the Second Lebanon War in 2006 are already inaccessible?

Just one year ago, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni nearly ousted Prime Minister Ehud Olmert for his mishandling of that war. And yet, in the run-up to last week's election, there she was, making the rounds of the American news media explaining why Israel had to act, this time against Hamas.

There was no acknowledgement of the similarities in context between the wars, and no recognition of the dangers to Gazan innocents along the same lines as those faced by Lebanese civilians, and no concern about creating heroes out of Mohammed Deif or Ismail Haniyeh in Gaza, the way Israel did with Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon.

Speaking of Lebanon, is Nasrallah too busy in his pulpit inveighing against the misdeeds of the Zionist regime and the Egyptian-assisted blockade of Gaza to recall that his country has kept – read: jailed – generations of Palestinians in refugee camps?

The moral outrage that has poured forth from Jordanian Palestinian sympathizers is no less hypocritical: few countries have been so historically apathetic toward a refugee problem so close to home as Jordan. In the 1970s, Jordan killed tens of thousands of Palestinians in an attempt to control Palestinian nationalist groups inside its borders and has since adhered to a policy of keeping quiet on the issue of Palestinian rights within Jordan.

Egypt, too, is hindered by this ubiquitous historical amnesia. President Hosni Mubarak walks a thin line. He has maintained the peace brokered between Israel and former president Anwar Sadat while simultaneously fostering a poisonously anti-Israel social climate in the media. State-sponsored media decry the evils of Israel, while no space is given to discussing Israel as anything but an enemy.

A question crystallizes, one that's pressing and puzzling: why is the self-reflective gaze so difficult to attain?

This goes well beyond the platitude that one man's freedom fighter is another's terrorist. Why is historical amnesia so common and, more importantly, how do we shatter its effect, which brings only others' transgressions into focus?

Well, it has a lot to do with when you start the clock. Take the latest war in Gaza for example: both Israel and Hamas claim that the other instigated the violence. If you begin after a rocket attack on an Israeli town, the actions of the Israel Defence Forces fit entirely within a reality of trepidation over terrorist violence. If, however, you begin one week before the military strikes started, when the fragile ceasefire frayed and Israel cut off all entry into Gaza – including supplies of food, fuel and other humanitarian necessities – then the actions of Hamas fit a bunker mentality of a beleaguered and besieged populace.

Or you can go back six months, to when Israel simultaneously planned this incursion on the one hand while it agreed to the ceasefire on the other.

Let the amnesia begin.

It would be a disgrace to those who were killed in Gaza if their memories were appropriated to call for more violence – if the cycle of amnesia were to continue and their deaths used as provocations and justifications for continued bloodshed and the deaths of others.

Only by breaking down the amnesia narrative that feeds the divide and cripples the region can the dead be honoured.

The historical amnesia can only be dislodged by a little soul-searching on the part of each nation. The pertinent question, then, is when do we start the clock? How far back we go determines much about how we view the conflict. This question is not currently being asked, but it's desperately important for any resolution.

The Kirshner File

Election plunges Israel into uncertainty

Confounding the predictions of pollsters, Tzipi Livni's centrist Kadima party won the greatest number of Knesset seats in last week's general election in Israel, the fifth in a decade.

In one of the closest contested elections in memory, Kadima narrowly defeated Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party by a one-seat margin. Both sides, however, declared victory, consigning Israel to a period of political limbo.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

This was not the outcome observers expected. On the eve of the Feb. 10 election, public opinion surveys indicated that Netanyahu would defeat Livni – the foreign minister in Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's lame-duck government – by a four-seat margin.

Nonetheless, Netanyahu, the former prime minister, has a better chance of forming the next government because the rightist bloc in parliament, known as the National Camp, commands more than 60 seats in the 120-seat chamber, while the centre-left bloc can only muster about 50-plus seats, assuming that Israeli Arab seats are also included. (Historically, Israeli Arab members of the Knesset from purely Arab parties have been excluded from Israeli governments).

It will fall to Israel's president, Shimon Peres, a member of Kadima, to decide which candidate can cobble together a coalition government, the only kind Israel has ever had.

Last year, after Olmert tendered his resignation, Livni tried unsuccessfully to form a government. If the past is any guide, Israelis will have to endure weeks of uncertainty to find out who their prime minister will be. The prime ministerial selection process, a classic example of unbridled horse-trading that has soured many Israelis on politics, is extremely time-consuming.

In the meantime, Olmert, his reputation sullied by a series of scandals, will stay on as caretaker prime minister – free to negotiate yet another ceasefire with Hamas following the recent three-week war in the Gaza Strip, and free to try to wrest Gilad Schalit – the Israeli soldier who has been held in Gaza since his abduction in the summer of 2006 – from captivity.

The wild card, the possible king maker who may hold the balance of power right now, is Avigdor Lieberman, whose far- right Yisrael Beitenu party, with 15 seats, has become the third-largest party in the Knesset, just ahead of the once powerful and now greatly diminished social democratic Labor party, led by Ehud Barak, the defence minister.

Lieberman – a Russian immigrant from Moldova who was elected to the Knesset in 1999 and who lives on a settlement in the West Bank – has had a fairly close political relationship with Netanyahu and has briefly held three cabinet posts – national infrastructure, transportation and strategic affairs – since 2001.

Successively director-general of the Likud and of the prime minister's office, Lieberman was first appointed to the cabinet by Ariel Sharon and then by Olmert.

A hard-liner, Lieberman opposed Sharon's decision to unilaterally withdraw from Gaza in 2005, believes that Israel should have toppled the Hamas regime in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead, and doubts whether a temporary truce with Hamas will hold or should be pursued.

Surprisingly enough, given his ultra-nationalist credentials, he supports a two-state solution. But in a radical departure from conventional Israeli thinking, he says that heavily populated Israeli Arab areas inside Israel, such as Wadi Arra, should be traded in exchange for settlement blocs in the West Bank. To Israeli Arabs, his proposal smacks of forcible transfer and racism.

Most controversially, he said that Israeli Arabs, comprising about 20 per cent of Israel's population, should be stripped of their citizenship unless they pass a loyalty test attesting to their attachment to Israel as a Jewish/Zionist state.

Lieberman's "No loyalty, no citizenship" slogan, which outraged Israel's Arabs and Jewish Israeli liberals alike, was in keeping with his opinion that the Israeli Arab minority is a possible fifth column.

In recent months, he has called for the execution of Arab Knesset members who meet Hamas representatives and has claimed that the goals of Balad – an Israeli Arab party that espouses a secular state in place of Israel – and Hamas are identical: Israel's destruction.

Lieberman, in deference to his largely secular constituency, has also alienated many religious Jews, and certainly the rabbinate, by advocating civil marriage in Israel.

Whatever one thinks of him, Lieberman will most likely play an important role in Israeli politics, given the assumption that Netanyahu or Livni would be hard-pressed to form a stable coalition without him.

Benjamin Netanyahu

Tzipi Livni

[Isranet photos]

Netanyahu and Livni, therefore, have courted him assiduously, realizing that their prime ministerial hopes rest on Lieberman's goodwill and co-operation.

Lieberman has been quoted as saying that he would prefer to serve in a rightist government led by Netanyahu. Ideologically, Lieberman is much closer to Netanyahu, a self-styled pragmatist in the mould of Sharon, than to Livni, a former Likudnik who moved to the centre after being appointed to Sharon's cabinet.

Love him or hate him, Netanyahu can take credit for rebuilding the Likud after its disastrous showing in the 2006 election, when it ended up with merely 12 seats.

Netanyahu, the prime minister from 1996 to 1999, capitalized on the dissatisfaction with the outcome of Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and the 2006 war in Lebanon.

He also gained ground by bringing in new members and by striking a relatively moderate tone.

In one of his most astute manoeuvres, he sidelined Likud extremist Moshe Feiglin, who has urged Israel to annex the West Bank and pay each Palestinian family $250,000 to leave.

Netanyahu appealed to his base by sticking to a few core principles.

He told his supporters he would not be bound by Olmert's promise to evacuate much of the West Bank and the majority of its Jewish settlers.

He said he would not build new settlements in the West Bank, but would allow for "natural growth" in existing ones.

He said he would not conduct negotiations with the Palestinians under the 2007 Annapolis format, deferring final status issues indefinitely, and would shift the focus to improving the Palestinian economy.

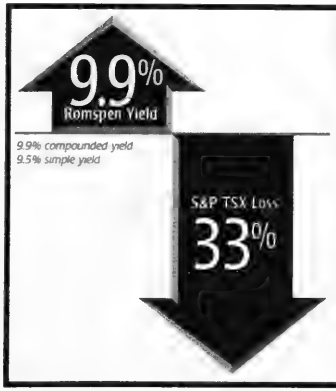
He did not rule out the possibility of a demilitarized Palestinian state, but claimed that such a state, if formed under current conditions, would effectively be "an Iranian state as we saw happen in Gaza."

Netanyahu warned that a pullout from eastern Jerusalem, annexed by Israel in 1967, would lead to "an Iranian-backed terror centre," and that a withdrawal from the Golan Heights "will turn [it] into Iran's front lines."

In this spirit, Netanyahu said that his top priority would be to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. He also vowed to topple the Hamas entity in Gaza. As he put it, "There is no choice but to uproot the Iranian-backed regime."

Livni, too, has pledged to unseat the Hamas government. But unlike Netanyahu, she is committed to continuing the peace process, on a political level, with the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas.

Livni denies that she supports a plan, backed by Olmert, calling for the division of Jerusalem and the maintenance of a Jewish presence in the West Bank in only a few selected settlement clusters. Her denial is indicative of the fact that, in this election, Israel has moved further to the right, and that the left in the Jewish sector has been virtually wiped out.



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Celebrating the birth of a daughter

By RABBI YEHIEL BEN AYON

The celebration of a boy's birth is clearly prescribed in the Torah, with the brit milah, the sacred covenant of the flesh: "On the eighth day you shall circumcise..."

On this day, a baby boy endures this ritual, and at the same time, he receives his name. This is a most joyous and festive time and in fact, the Talmud correctly prophesied that this would be one event that would be observed by all Jews for all time.

On the other hand, for the birth of a baby girl, there is neither a biblical nor a rabbinic prescription, only custom.

A custom's development is as much a result of economic and environmental concerns as of its reason for being, in this case the birth of a baby girl. And so, the harsh realities of poverty and whether food was or was not available had as much to do with the development of customs related to the birth of a baby girl as the birth itself. While a brit milah is not required, a girl needs to be given a name as much as a boy does. It's the question of celebration that remains open.

In the Ashkenazi tradition, it is the norm to give one's daughter her name at the very first Torah reading after her birth – that is, on a Shabbat, Monday or Thursday. Here, the father is called to the Torah, after which a name is given to the baby. Many have a custom to host some sort of kiddush thereafter.

Sephardi custom is altogether different. First, there is no rush toward that first Torah reading. In fact, there is no connection with Torah reading at all. In the Sephardi tradition, parents of a baby girl have a whole month within which to host their event, as they are not bound to any specific day.

The celebration of a girl's birth often surpasses that of a boy: there is much more time for preparation, there is much more flexibility as to its date, and evening events are wholly acceptable (a brit milah may be undertaken only during daylight hours).

During a festive meal, the baby girl, dressed in frilly and lacy white, is placed on a similarly lacy, white pillow. She is "brought out" by her grandmothers, who proudly parade her about. Folkloric songs have been written specifically for this occasion. Of particular fame are those composed by Rabbi David Elkayim.

The baby is passed from the arms of the grandmothers to the arms of all the female members of the family, cousins, aunts and others, making her way at last to the arms of her mother.

The rabbi then chants the words: "May He Who blessed our mothers Sara, Rachel, Rebecca and Leah; Miriam and Abigail the prophetesses, and Queen Esther; may He bless this delightful child and let her name be called [name inserted here] b'mazal tov and b'siman tov. May He raise her in good health and peace and prosperity for her father and mother to experience her joys and her chupah and her own childbirth in prosperity and honour."

Choosing microscopes over masterpieces

Faced with a double set economic woes spurred by the world financial crisis and the Madoff Ponzi scheme, Brandeis University has recently found itself confronting a multi-million dollar deficit and a set of difficult decisions about the future of the institution.

In a recent emergency meeting to address the fiscal situation, the university's board of trustees voted to close and liquidate the collection of the Rose Art Museum.

Class Act
By Daniel Held

The Rose, which I have visited on a number of occasions, is a humble institution and home to nearly 6,000 works of modern American art, including formative works of Warhol, Lichtenstein and Rauschenberg. Founded nearly 50 years ago, the museum serves the university and greater Boston communities with changing exhibits, lectures and educational programs. It's a self-funding institution within the university, raising its own donations and even giving 15 per cent of these funds to the university's general coffers.

In announcing the closing of the gallery, Brandeis president Jehuda Reinharz wrote that the university's priority "in the face of hard choices, will always be the university's core teaching and research mission."

The museum, however, is so much more than a gallery. I join the hundreds of student, alumni and arts-community protesters who have tried to demonstrate that the museum is at the heart of Brandeis' educational mandate.

The Rose is a centre for research and publication. In its 50 years, the museum has produced more than 85 exhibition catalogues, with researched texts authored by Brandeis scholars and outside academics.

The Rose is also a centre for internships and student learning. Interns learn skills in curation, education, registration and development. They engage in hands-on learning, supplementing their courses with work experience. The Rose hosts regular university courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in areas such as art history, education, creative writing, psychology, anthropology and theatre. Classes descend on the museum from across Brandeis' faculties and from other local institutions. Finally, the Rose hosts regular symposia based around current exhibits and visiting academics and artists.

Notwithstanding these academic credentials and the Rose's central role in the university's mission, the board of trustees at Brandeis chose to value the microscope over the museum's masterpieces, sacrificing the Rose in favour of other university assets and faculties.

Arts are an easy target during difficult times. Over and over, we have seen public schools make cuts to music, drama and other arts programs, citing the added expense of these specialized courses. The Rose, too, is an easy target. The Rose is a liquid and extremely valuable investment, so closing the museum and selling the collection will allow the university to forgo or defer other difficult spending cuts that it has been considering, such as cutting its faculty by 10 per cent or increasing undergraduate enrolment by 12 per cent. I can only imagine the agonizing debate that took place around the boardroom table about how to trim an already-tight budget.

As the impact of the economic crisis continues to affect our community and as the pool of philanthropic money continues to evaporate, more communal agencies will be forced to make difficult decisions similar to that of the Brandeis board of trustees. Schools will consider what classes to run and what programs to cut, federations will have to balance the needs of funded agencies, and a new equation will have to be established regarding our community's local needs versus those abroad. These decisions will not be easy.

Shortly after I finished writing the first draft of this column, Reinharz sent a second e-mail to the Brandeis community. In it, he expressed regret about the board's quick and opaque decision, and he thanked the university community for passionately expressing its dismay. While the final fate of the Rose remains unclear, Reinharz's reflective tone and open ear toward the voices of his faculty and students is certainly a step in the direction of the type of dialogues we will need in the coming years.

Jewish Life

Carter incites Palestinian extremism: Dershowitz

The Case Against Israel's Enemies: Exposing Jimmy Carter and Others Who Stand in the Way of Peace, by Alan Dershowitz, published by Wiley.

Books
Bernard Baskin

The Jewish community is fortunate that Alan Dershowitz, renowned professor at Harvard Law School and one of America's foremost appellate lawyers, is a strong, courageous, and passionate defender of the State of Israel. He is always cogent, lucid, knowledgeable and outspoken.

In his new book, The Case Against Israel's Enemies: Exposing Jimmy Carter and Others Who Stand in the Way of Peace, he gets quickly to the heart of the matter with the following anecdote that concerns a talk he gave to a large audience at the University of California at Irvine. "I asked audience members how many of them would count themselves as generally pro-Israel. About a hundred or so students raised their hands. I then asked these pro-Israel students how many of them would favour a Palestinian state existing in peace alongside Israel. Every single one of them raised a hand.

"I next asked how many audience members counted themselves as supportive of the Palestinian side. A similar number raised their hands. I asked the pro-Palestine students how many of them would support a peaceful, non-expansionist Israel located beside a Palestinian state. Not a single person raised a hand."

He challenges open-minded individuals to dispute the following propositions.

- If Israel's military enemies – Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran and other terrorist groups and nations – were to lay down their arms, stop firing rockets, stop sending suicide bombers and stop threatening to wipe Israel off the map, there would be peace.
- If Israel were to lay down arms, there would be genocide.

This is the sad reality that Israel's enemies forget or ignore when they blame Israel for the current situation in the Middle East.

In disputing the arguments former U.S. president Jimmy Carter makes in his book Peace Not Apartheid, the author presents 20 pages of detailed refutation of Carter's ideas. Sadly, he concludes that Carter is an enemy of a compromised peace, an inciter of Palestinian extremism and an apologist for those who would continue to employ terror in an effort to destroy the Jewish state.

This book includes chapters against the anti-Israel hard left and hard right, against Israel's suicidal enemies as well as against Iran's genocidal nuclear war program.

Dershowitz warns that armed with nuclear weapons and ruled by religious fanatics, Iran will become – if it is not already – the most dangerous nation in the world. In addition to a suicidal nuclear exchange with Israel, there is a greater likelihood that it could hand over nuclear material to one of its terrorist surrogates or that some rogue elements could steal nuclear material.

Turning ironic, Dershowitz points out that Israel is the only country in the world that is accused by its enemies of practising apartheid without racism; of perpetrating a Holocaust without gas chambers, of engaging in genocide without mass murder; of committing war crimes without targeting civilians; and of being the worst human rights violator in the world while having one of the most responsive legal systems in the world.

Writes the author, "This is accusation by metaphor, prosecution by propaganda, trial by bigotry, guilt by hyperbole."

The author reminds us that the 1947-48 war, started by the Palestinians and the Arab nations, was a war of extermination conducted in part by Nazi war criminals intent on completing Hitler's Final Solution. It resulted in an exchange of populations – 700,000 Palestinians left Israel under pressures of the war, and approximately the same number of Jews were forced to leave Arab countries and areas of Israel that were captured by the Arabs.

The Jewish state quickly settled the Jewish refugees, while the Arab states refused to settle the Palestinian refugees.

Verdict: buy this book and give copies to your friends and neighbours.

Tikkun olam, Part 2

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Last week, we looked at the roots of tikkun olam, an expression often translated as "repairing the world." As the phrase has gained popularity through the centuries, it certainly has taken on extra meanings – and some would say, baggage. Today, redefining tikkun olam.

When you look around the web, there is no shortage of entries that incorporate tikkun olam as part of their mandate. You come across articles such as "Tikkun Olam and Environmental Restoration: A Jewish Eco-Theology of Redemption". **[tinyurl.com/tikkun13]** Elsewhere, Douglas Rosenberg argues that the work of artists – in this case dancers – play an important role in tikkun olam, particularly in a post-Holocaust world. **[tinyurl.com/tikkun18]**

Rabbi Jill Jacobs puts it bluntly: "There may be no other term that is simultaneously as beloved and as reviled in Jewish progressive circles as the phrase 'tikkun olam'… so overused and so little understood as to be meaningless." In lengthy essays, she traces the history and meanings of the phrase and suggests a redefinition of "tikkun olam as the process of fixing large societal problems, while maintaining a belief that our actions can have a positive effect on the greater human and divine world." **[tinyurl.com/tikkun05]**

Rabbi Arthur Green of Brandeis University acknowledges that associating tikkun olam with ideals such as the relief of human suffering and the protection of the planet from destruction may be a recent innovation. But he says these goals are rooted in Jewish tradition that requires a concern for the "feeding, housing and health, of all. The Torah's call that we 'pursue justice, only justice' (Deuteronomy 16:20) **[tinyurl.com/tikkun 01]** demands that we work toward closing the terrible gaps, especially in learning and opportunity, that exist within our society and undermine our moral right to the relative wealth and comfort most of us enjoy." **[tinyurl.com/tikkun12]**

British Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks asks why there is no halachic law for tikkun olam similar to that for Shabbat or kashrut. He suggests that it never evolved because "for 2,000 years what chance did we have? For 2,000 years, we were dispersed, scattered, exiled, we were powerless… who in the world would think of learning from us?" But he quotes God's blessing to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, "Through you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" or, in other words, "don't think this Torah that I am giving you is for you alone, it isn't – this is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nation – because when they hear and see this way of life, this Jewish way of life, they will say what a wise, understanding people is this great nation." **[tinyurl.com/tikkun02]**

Eytan Kobre writes on the Jewish Law website that tikkun olam "has emerged over recent decades as the catch-all description of choice for all manner of socially conscious activities, from old-fashioned charity and saving the redwoods to fighting Republican tax cuts." Kobre says that "the most important battles for the creation of a just and harmonious society are not fought primarily through sweeping campaigns for national reform. Rather, the building of a better world for humanity is best achieved through the personal campaign of each individual to engage in a process of repairing the flaws of his or her own *olam kattan*, that micro-cosmic world known as the human soul. The God-given tools for that task are the mitzvot, both the overtly ethical and the so-called ritual precepts, which, in fact, can be deeply ethically enriching as well." **[tinyurl.com/tikkun07]**

Finally, I do like this story about a teacher who tried to teach the literal message of "repairing" the world by tearing a map of the world into many pieces and challenging a student to reassemble it. "The student dropped to the floor and, in short order, completed the assignment by correctly taping together each of the pieces of the whole of the world… "When the teacher asked the student how it had been possible to reassemble the fragmented world so quickly, the response was short and to the point. 'There was a picture of a person on the back side. I repaired that one person and the whole world got fixed, too.'" **[tinyurl.com/tikkun16]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

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MESSAGES TO ISRAEL: During Israel's recent war in Gaza, senior kindergarten students at Bialik Hebrew Day School discussed the feelings of children in southern Israel, who weren't able to go to school because of the dangers surrounding them. The Bialik students drew pictures and wrote heartfelt messages to a kindergarten class on Kibbutz Shoval in the Negev. The teacher of the class wrote back to say that it meant a great deal to the Israeli kids to receive the letters. Pictured with their drawing are Zachary Bensky and Eilat Ravid.

On cjnews.com this week

- **CJC helps Rwandan genocide survivor return home**

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Islam doesn't recognize Jewish right to statehood, scholar says

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Many Muslims regard Israel as an illegitimate state because Islam doesn't recognize the Jewish people's right to statehood, says Bar-Ilan University political scientist Mordechai Kedar.

Kedar, a specialist in Islam and popular culture in the Arab world, said that Islam considers Judaism a religion but not a nationality.

This being the case, most Muslims do not accept Israel's existence, observed Kedar, who spoke Feb. 6 at the law offices of Minden Gross at the invitation of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's real estate cabinet.

"For many of our enemies, Tel Aviv and Haifa are occupied areas," he said.

Kedar, one of the few Israelis to have been interviewed by the Al-Jazeera TV network, described Israel as a unique state, because its regional enemies refuse to recognize its legitimacy.

"Our mere existence is not recognized by some of our neighbours. It is a unique situation."

Israel's quest for Muslim recognition is also hampered by the Muslim belief that Islam will eventually supplant Christianity and Judaism and by the perception that historic Palestine is an Islamic endowment that cannot be partitioned, he noted.

Israel's peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan are regarded by Arabs as temporary, he said, adding that Arabs who recognize Israel embrace its existence in de facto but not in de jure terms.

Suggesting that Israel has no alternative but to be on perpetual guard, Kedar said Israel's hostile neighbours want to wipe it out, even if it takes centuries.

"The Arabs can wait," he said. "They have patience."

Mordechai Kedar

Israel's enemies compare Israel to the ill-fated Crusader states – which lasted no more than about 200 years – while the leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, likens Israel to an extremely vulnerable spider's web, said Kedar, who is also a research associate at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

Calling Iran Israel's most dangerous foe, he pointed out that Arab Gulf states have also been targeted by the Islamic fundamentalist Iranian regime.

"The world doesn't fully appreciate the threat posed by Iran," he said, referring to its budding nuclear program and its regional ambitions.

Kedar said the Arab world at present is split into pro-and anti-Iran camps, and it's so fragmented that Israel has no need to worry about its future.

As he put it, "Arab horses are pulling Arab wagons in different directions."

The Arab world lacks a co-ordinated position on a whole range of issues, but in this respect, Iran is focused, he warned.

Chabad Markham fundraises for Moshe Holtzberg

Chabad Lubavitch of Markham's Women of the World (WOW) organization recently hosted its winter event, attended by nearly 200 women.

The event, Discover Your Inner and Outer Beauty, was inspired by the death of Rebbetzin Rivka Holtzberg and her husband, Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg, in Mumbai, during a terrorist attack at the end of November.

Rebbetzin Goldie Plotkin addressed the crowd. Her topic was the contribution of the Holtzbergs to world Jewry and their work at their centre in Mumbai.

Ferro Hair Art and Spa sponsored the event, which raised funds for Moshe Holtzberg, the Holtzbergs' two-year-old son, who survived the Mumbai massacre. Moshe is now living in Israel. Rebbetzin Plotkin will personally deliver the funds raised to Israel.

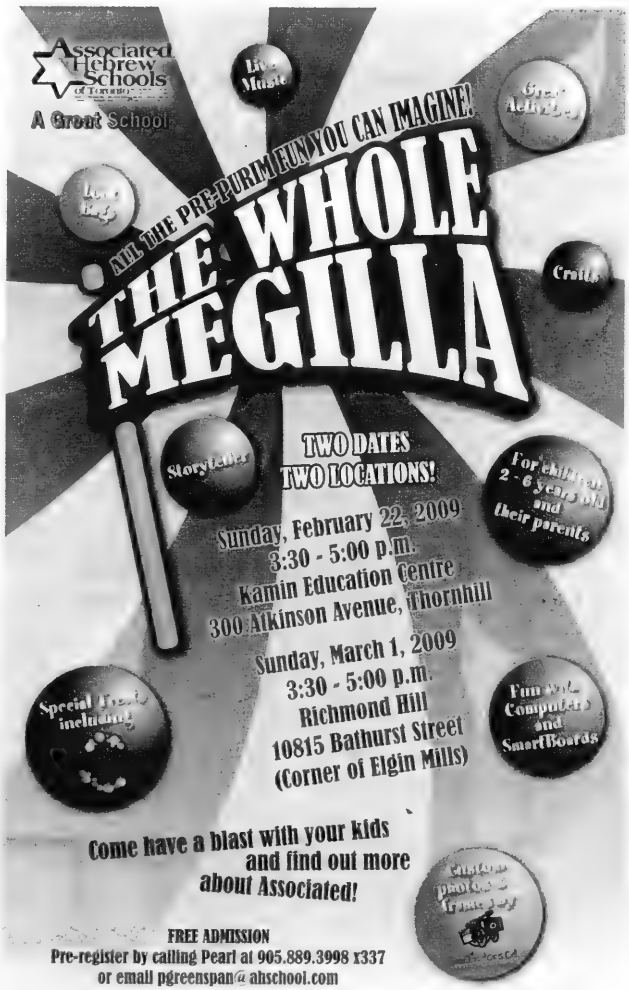
WOW's event included the creation of a "spa" at the synagogue. Hair, makeup, skin therapy and fashion stylist professionals from Ferro Hair Art & Spa counselled attendees at various workshops that were held throughout the morning. Raffle prizes included spa services and Di-Amanda denim and diamond jewelry, as well as tickets to popular sporting events in Toronto.

PLANTING SMILES: Grade 3 students at Netivot HaTorah Day School enjoyed fruit platters donated by the school's parents association in honour of Tu b'Shvat. [Rebecca Ansel photo]

TU B'SHVAT SEDER: Habonim Dror and Camp Gesher held their annual Tu b'Shvat seder at the Miles Nadal JCC on Feb. 8. Pictured, from left, are Danielle Brown, Jordana Starkman and Jackie Selick.

THE TRADITION OF FRUIT: The Hunter family were among the guests who enjoyed traditional treats at Toronto's Secular Jewish Community School's annual Tu b'Shvat seder on Feb. 8 at the Winchevsky Centre. From left are Shaina, Alex and Sylvia Hunter.

HELPING OTHERS: As part of Tu b'Shvat celebrations, students at United Synagogue Day Schools Bathurst campus collected food to donate to to the Chai Tikvah and Na Ma Res shelters. Pictured clockwise from top left are Michelle Schneeweiss, Emily Freeman, Maddy Hyman and Rebecca Feldman.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Reform rabbi asks: Where are the men?

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The dozen or so men who attended a Temple Har Zion program last month on "Where have all the Men Gone? Bringing Men Back into the Reform Community" did not appear to be the men referred to in the title of Rabbi Cory Weiss' talk.

Rabbi Cory Weiss

Rabbi Weiss, spiritual leader of the temple – and its only male clergy and staff member – knew all the attendees by name. However, the rabbi told The CJN that the issue under discussion on a January Sunday morning at Leo Baeck Day School, where Har Zion holds its religious school classes, seems to be more pressing in the United States.

"This has been something kicking around the Reform movement for a few years now," he said in a phone interview before his talk, which was co-sponsored by Har Zion's adult education committee and brotherhood.

Over the last three decades, as women have become empowered in Reform Judaism – the first denomination in North America to ordain a woman as rabbi in 1972 – there has been concern about disempowering men," Rabbi Weiss said.

According to a JTA article last May, the Reform movement has decreasing numbers of boys in its post-bar mitzvah religious schools, youth groups and summer camps. As well, more than half of the recently ordained Reform rabbis are women, as were all of last year's students entering cantorial school.

To address the issue, the group Men of Reform Judaism has sponsored men's worship services at recent movement biennials and published a Men's Haggadah, JTA reported.

"We at Har Zion don't have this problem of all the men sort of disappearing, but we certainly want to avoid it," said Rabbi Weiss. "How do we make sure that everybody's a part of things?"

For the rabbi, who was ordained in 1993, egalitarianism has always been the norm. When he was growing up in Connecticut, both his parents worked, his father did the cooking at home, and his congregation did not hire a male cantor until the year the future rabbi was confirmed.

One attendee noted that the phenomenon of men taking a less prominent role or opting out altogether is not unique to the Reform movement, citing a concern about the perceived roles of men in the other professional fields.

"Certainly there's a possibility that men are trying to spend more time with family, and synagogues are suffering for it," Rabbi Weiss said.

"How do we re-empower men?" the rabbi asked. "What do we [men] bring that is unique?"

He suggested that serving as a role model is one answer.

"How do we show [boys] that Judaism is as meaningful to us as to anyone, and that, for a Jewish man synagogue, study and prayer – that's what men do in addition to hockey games?"

About Nutrition

By LISA WEINBERG

Q. I am wondering about how heart disease can be prevented through diet – it runs in my family?

A. Amazingly, a great deal of cardiovascular disease can be prevented through diet and lifestyle, yet it remains the No. 1 killer of Canadians, men and women. Here are some tips to help you prevent the onset of heart disease.

Eliminate trans fat from your diet. That means reading labels to ensure that there is no hydrogenated fat, shortening, palm or coconut oil in your foods, and do not trust the claims on the front of the package regarding trans fat. Read the ingredients, in order to be sure.

Limit saturated fat. This is the fat in high-fat animal products like fatty beef, cream, butter, ice cream, baked goods, cheese, etc. Choose low fat dairy products and leaner cuts of beef like flank. In addition, either have smaller portions or choose beef less often.

Increase heart healthy fat. Eat more nuts, particularly almonds and walnuts; choose olive oil; eat fish such as salmon, preferably wild (all canned salmon is wild) and sardines.

Increase the fibre in your diet. We need about 25 grams per day, which is a lofty number, but if you start your day with a high-fibre cereal, especially one with psyllium, eat some whole grains or whole grain bread through the day along with healthy servings of fruits and vegetables you can reach that number. Choose legumes, chick peas, kidney beans, black beans, etc; use them in salads, soups, dips, pita pockets, etc. Bake homemade treats using whole wheat flour and reduced fat and sugar. Fill up with fresh fruits and vegetables, salads, veggies and low fat dip, stir-fries, roasted veggies, vegetable soups, chillis.

Last word of advice: exercise as much as you can.

Q. I have a 13-month-old baby who is very constipated since he started on table food. What do I do?

A. This is very common at this age. When babies make the transition from formula or breast milk, usually around age one, and start to have cows' milk and table food, constipation is often a problem. This is partially because the formula or breast milk is less binding and easier to digest, while milk can be constipating. In addition, there is often an over-consumption of milk and a reduction in bulking foods.

At age one, is it expected that appetites slow down, as less growth occurs between one and two years of age than in the first year of life. As well, at age one, kids are becoming fascinated with the world around them and their ability to move, crawl or walk, and would rather explore than sit and eat. This is often coupled with a desire to drink a lot of milk and therefore fill up on it. At this age, kids require only about 16 ounces of milk per day to meet their calcium requirements – and that's if they aren't getting calcium from cheese, yogurt or other foods; so less may even be okay too.

If your child is constipated, watch that he isn't over-consuming dairy. Bananas and white rice can also be binding and you should limit those. Push water, fruits and vegetables, and whole grains, like high-fibre cereals, breads, pasta, brown rice, oatmeal, homemade baked goods with fibre, legumes. Also it is a good idea to ask your child's doctor if he or she feels a laxative is necessary to help your baby.

Lisa Weinberg is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in Toronto, in private practice and at the Genesis Professional Group. If you have any nutrition questions, please send them to The CJN.

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Confrontations escalate at York University

Continued from page 1

"The Jewish community really came together for the first time ever on campus and really stood up against this stuff," he said. "We sang, we danced, we sang Hatikvah, O Canada, and that was it."

But confrontations between pro-Israel and anti-Israel students at York have not gone so smoothly as of late.

A day earlier, on Feb. 11, students involved in the Drop YFS campaign – a student-run initiative to impeach executive members of the York Federation of Students due to their inactivity during the recent CUPE strike, which shut down the university for three months – were preparing to announce that they had gathered the 5,000 signatures necessary to oust the YFS executive.

Rosenberg, one of the petition's organizers, said Drop YFS decided to hold a press conference in a room in York's student centre to announce the collection of the signatures and to hand the petition to the university's chief returning officer, who oversees the recall process.

"We got there, and Students Against Israel Apartheid were there with their crew, the Tamil Tigers were there with their whole crew and Krisna Saravanamuttu, the YFS' vice-president of equity, was there as well," Rosenberg said.

He said that within 90 seconds, the mob of people that had gathered outside the room – who weren't allowed in because of capacity restrictions – began making accusations of racism.

"It was obviously not racist because there was a diverse section of the student body in the room."

He said they started to bang on the walls, scream and yell. "We were nervous that it would become violent and there would be no way out of the room… so we cancelled the meeting, left and we went straight to the Hillel."

He said what happened next was something that he and Hillel staff had never seen before.

"It was basically a siege. They were screaming and yelling and banging on the walls of the Hillel, screaming, 'Let us in.' It was a very scary situation," Rosenberg said.

"We called security, but they couldn't do anything for us. We called the police and the police weren't willing to do anything for us but escort us out of the building."

Among the slurs shouted by the mob were "Die Jew," "Get the hell off campus," "Go back to Israel," and "F---ing Jew," Hillel said in a statement.

Michael Payton, a York student who witnessed the incident, posted a note on Facebook saying that he saw the YFS' Saravanamuttu leading the mob.

"I saw him after the rally shaking people's hands and thanking them for coming," Payton wrote.

Rosenberg said that the Drop YFS campaign was not a Jewish affair, but the YFS made it so by blaming Jewish and Zionist groups on campus for the initiative.

He said YFS supporters distributed flyers against the group, which he described as "a hit list" of six Drop YFS organizers.

He said that he, along with Sammy Katz, Hasbara's campus co-ordinator; Daniel Ferman, Hillel at York's president, and Ilan Mann, who is involved with AEPi, the Jewish fraternity, were singled out as being a part of a "Zionist conspiracy" to bring down the YFS.

"It's very scary to be identified like that at York," Rosenberg said.

He said that earlier that day, Shoukri and members of York's administration met with representatives of Jewish and Muslim student groups and SAIA to talk about the rally.

"[York's administration] is useless. Let's be honest here," Rosenberg said.

University spokesperson Alex Bilyk said that York is "dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge and the freedom of expression," but "we have a responsibility to provide a safe and secure campus for all of our students, faculty and staff."

However, he did not elaborate on how the administration would work to keep students safe.

The week before, York student Jessica Abourmad was involved in a "scuffle" with a member of SAIA.

"They had up a mock 'apartheid wall,' which they did not have a permit for [from the university], and they were handing out flyers calling for the boycott of Israeli academics," Abourmad said.

"I was standing there and some guy was calling me a Zionist, fascist pig and I wasn't even talking to him."

Offended by the flyers, she decided to take them from the table SAIA had set up and dispose of them.

Abourmad said that Hammam Farrah, a member of SAIA who is not a York student, pursued her.

"He whips around me, grabs the flyers – I don't even know what happened, but I fell back. I was in shock."

Her friends called 911, but it took police 20 minutes to arrive at the scene. In the meantime, she said a group of Farrah's supporters came up with a story and planned to discredit Abourmad's account of events.

The police told her they couldn't press charges, because there were too many witnesses on the other side who said it didn't happen.

Even more disturbing was an incident involving a Jewish student who received a phone call in the middle of the night on Feb. 4. Abourmad, who knows the victim, said the caller threatened the student and his family with rape and murder, in both English and Hebrew.

York Regional Police Detective Brett Kemp, who is investigating the incident as a hate crime, didn't want to repeat the threat but confirmed that the comments were hateful and there was a threat to harm both the student and his family.

"There is an obvious hate motivation behind the comments that were made, and that is why it is being investigated as a hate crime."

The hate crime unit is following up on leads, and "it is likely that they will be able to identify who has done it," Kemp said.

B'nai Brith Canada said it has requested an "urgent" meeting with York officials to discuss security for Jewish students.

"We have already been in communication with police and demanded that the safety and security of Jewish students at York University and other campuses be dealt with as a matter of top priority," executive vice-president Frank Diamant said in a statement.

"The climate on York's campus of aggressive intimidation, violent rhetoric and physical harassment is unacceptable," Hillel's Ferman said. "The hostile environment demonstrates contempt for all students – not only to Jewish students."

* * *

In a separate incident at Ryerson University last week, Ryerson's CUPE union president Donald Elder sent an e-mail to his members – mainly part-time instructors and teaching assistants – that an anti-Israel resolution will be presented and voted on at the Ontario University Workers Co-ordinating Committee (OUWCC) meeting on Feb. 20.

The resolution seeks to "defend the right of Palestinians students [to] have access to education and educational institutions in the Palestinian territory."

It also urges members to discuss a boycott of Israeli academic institutions, to "investigate both research and investment links between Ontario universities and the state of Israel's military," and "request funding and support from CUPE Ontario to conduct an education campaign on the academic boycott.

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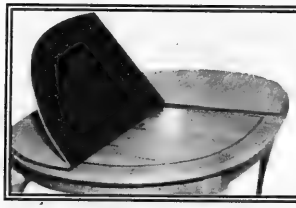
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Mazel tov on the bar mitzvah of Benno van Meijeren Karp.

Mazel tov on the recent engagement of Jonathan Weissman & Eva Erlich.

Mazel tov to Michal Warmberg & Anschel Luftig on their recent wedding.

Mazel tov on the recent marriage of Tzivia Arnow & Benny Weiss.

Mazel tov on the graduation of Dr. Yankie (Jacob) Silverstone.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Michael Khvilovsky & Angela Vinokurov.

Mazel tov on the recent birth of Keren Zeev Acoca.

Mazel tov to Moish Lehrer & Tiffany Schwartz-Weitz on their recent engagement.

What's New

Continued from page 20

TUESDAYS FILM SERIES

Beth Tikvah Synagogue movie series concludes with From Shtetl to Swing. 2 p.m. $5. 416-221-3433

PRAYER: THE *AMIDAH*

Mekorot offers "Prayer: A Careful Reading of the *Amidah*," exploring the central prayer of Jewish liturgy. Gain a closer understanding and secure a spiritual connection through a careful reading of this prayer with **Devorah Vale**. Tuesdays, 1:15-2:30 p.m. Today to March 24. Women only. Registration and location, www.mekorot.ca or 416-877-2050.

WHAT'S KILLING JUDAISM

Temple Har Zion presents "Is Religion Killing Judaism?" with **Rabbi Michael Skobac**, 7:30 p.m. Explore some of the negative stereotypes about religion that sometimes keep Jews away from Judaism. Non-members $5. 905-889-2252

FREE LOAN CASSA

The Pride of Israel Synagogue "Rosh Chodesh Program" offers a chance to learn about how the Toronto Free Loan Cassa helps the Jewish community for personal, education and business startup needs since 1924. Musical intro by **Willie Lindo**. 7 p.m. Admission by a food or cash donation to the kosher food bank. 416-226-0111, ext. 10

JEWISH COMMUNISM

The Polish Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada and Jewish Genealogical Society present **Piotr Wrobel** on "Rise and Death of Jewish Communism in Poland 1897-1943." 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. Non-members $5.

Wednesday, Feb. 25

LIFE DRAWING OPEN STUDIO

Life drawing open studio with no instruction, takes place Wednesdays 12-3 p.m. at the Antibes Community Centre. Registration $45 and $10 per session. Info call **Barbara**, 416-665-8262.

ADULT CAREGIVER GROUP

Baycrest Centre offers a "Caring for Your Loved One Group," an education and support group for adult children providing caregiving for a parent living in the community with dementia. Today-April 1, 6-7:30 p.m. Facilitated by a social worker and occupational therapist. Free. Registration, **Elaine Kohn**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2998.

SAR-EL INFO MEETING

Find out about the Sar-El program, civilian volunteers working on Israeli army supply-maintenance bases. 7:30 p.m. 788 Marlee Ave. RSVP, 416-781-6089 or info, www.sarelcanada.org.

SURVIVAL SEMINAR

Jews For Judaism offers an opportunity to learn the differences between Judaism and Christianity and how to respond to those who challenge your faith. Six weeks, with **Rabbi Michael Skobac** begins tonight, 8 p.m. at Adath Israel Congregation. Free. Register, 416-789-0020.

MAJOR JEWISH QUESTIONS

Rabbi Philip Scheim continues to answer Four Questions for Our Time, Wednesdays through March 11, 8 p.m. at Beth David Synagogue. Tonight, "Is Intermarriage a Death Sentence for the Jewish People?" 416-633-5500

Other News

THE DYBBUK

Teatron Theatre presents The Dybbuk starring **Howard Jerome**, Feb. 25-March 8, at the Leah Posluns Theatre. Tickets $22-$44. 416-781-5527 or www.teatron theatre.com

FILM AND DISCUSSION

Temple Har Zion's Daytime Programs screens The Band's Visit followed by a discussion with **Rabbi Cory Weiss**.Thursday, Feb. 26, 1 p.m. Non-members $5.

LITERARY READING

Nora Gold will read from her new novel, Exile, Thursday, Feb. 26, 2 p.m. at the Wychwood Library, 1431 Bathurst St.

MEMORY CHANGES

Baycrest Centre offers "Age-related Memory Changes: How Your Memory Works." Learn how we retrieve information, the effects of aging on the processes and how certain types of memory hold up better than others later in life, with **Dr. Fregus Craig**, of the Rotman Research Institute, and **Dr. Marla Shapiro**. Thursday, Feb. 26, 7-8:30 p.m. RSVP, 416-785-2500, ext. 6215, or speakersseries@baycrest.org.

THE SISTINE SECRETS

Rabbi Benjamin Blech, of Yeshiva University, speaks on "The Sistine Secrets: Michelangelo's Forbidden Messages in the Heart of the Vatican," and relates how and why Michelangelo incorporated teachings from midrash and Kabbalah into the Sistine Chapel. Thursday, Feb. 26, 8 p.m. at Kehillat Shaarei Torah. education@shaareitorah.com or 416-229-2600, ext. 5

JACS CONFERENCE

JACS hosts "Judaism and Recovery Hand in Hand," a conference at which Jews in recovery, with their family and friends, join in a weekend of spiritual growth and awareness, with on-going meetings, workshops and speakers in a safe environment for Jews of all denominations. Feb. 27-March 1. Registration and info, 416-638-0350, ext. 221, or www.jacstoronto.org.

1001 NIGHTS OF PURIM

Celebrate Purim with food and fun with Na'amat Aliza and Tamar chapters, Saturday, Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. at the Borochov Centre. $30 in advance, $36 at the door. 416-636-5425

SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School hosts an open house for those interested in senior kindergarten to Grade 8. Wednesday, March 4, 10 a.m. Miles Nadal JCC. RSVP, 416-928-3537.

SURVIVING DIVORCE

Jewish Family and Child Services offers "Surviving Divorce: Avoiding Financial Disaster," a workshop exploring the common financial mistakes made in divorce and how to avoid them. With a certified financial planner and divorce financial analyst. Wednesday, March 4, 7-8:30 p.m. at 2600 Bathurst St. Free. Register, 416-638-7800, ext. 215 or at www.jfandcs.com.

TRIP TO UKRAINE

Canadian Friends of the Ukrainian Jewish Community is hosting a tour of historic and contemporary Ukraine, including Kiev, Uman and Odessa. April 19-26, with optional Israel tour, April 27-May 5, Info, www.cfujc.org or 1-888-956-0003.

JEWISH INFO SERVICE

Jewish Information Service of Greater Toronto provides one-stop Jewish information on community events, holidays, shuls, camps, kosher restaurants, etc. Call and let them help you with your Jewish needs, 416-635-5600 or visit jewishtoronto.com and click on "Doing Jewish In Toronto."

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Circle of Care is seeking hospice volunteers to help improve the quality of life of persons who have a life-threatening diagnosis. 30 hours of training is provided, as well as a high level of support. For information, call **Mindy Shiel**, 416-635-2860, ext. 467.

FOR SENIORS

The Association of Jewish Seniors presents **Julius Ciss** on "Confessions of a Former Jew for Jesus." Thursday, Feb. 19, 1:30 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. RSVP, 416-635-2860.

Chai Shalom Social Club hosts "Viva Las Vegas Cabaret" with **Terry James**, Sunday Feb. 22, 1:30 p.m. Beth Emeth and Chai Shalom members $6, guests $10. Reserve by Feb. 19, 416-633-3838.

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC, "Purim Musical celebration," with Israeli musician and refreshments. Thursday, March 5, 1:15 p.m. Pre-register by March 1, 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Beth Tzedec Congregation Haverim Program offers "A Showcase of Moving Scenes" with Act II Studio. Monday, March 2, 1:30 p.m. $3. 416-781-3511

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Casino Rama, Wednesday, March 11. For information on all programs, call Tuesdays-Thursdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112

The Zoo Comes to Betel, Wednesday, Feb. 25, 1-3 p.m.

"Surviving the Winter" with **Judy Weiss**, personal growth coach. Thursday, Feb. 26, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca

Register now for "break" camps, March Break Camp, March 16-20 and Passover Break Camp, April 6-17. Ext. 378 or centrecamp@bjcc.ca.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Sundays on Bloor Music Talk with **Jordan Klapman**, "Rock 'n' Roll Jews: **Barry Mann** and **Cynthia Weil, Jeff Barry** and **Ellie Greenwich**: Million Dollar Babies." Sunday, Feb. 22, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. $9, includes a light breakfast. Register, ext. 0.

Toronto Jewish Film Society presents I Love You, Alice B. Toklas! with guest speaker **Mark Clamen**. Sunday, Feb. 22, 4 and 7:30 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre. $15. Ext. 606.

The Canadian Art Foundation presents The 2009 Reel Artists Film Festival, Feb. 27-March 1 at the Al Green Theatre. Tickets, www.canadianart.ca/reelartists/tickets or 416-368-8854, ext. 102.

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Jeffrey Snider	Jan 31/09	635 Village Green
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Ernest Goldberger	Feb 2/09	10 Torresdale Ave
Philip Eisenberg	Feb 3/09	10 Tichester Rd
Edith Levy	Feb 3/09	100 Upper Madison Ave
Haskell Zabitsky	Feb 5/09	342 Spadina Rd
Mina Lichanskaia	Feb 5/09	4415 Bathurst St
Gloria Daniels	Feb 5/09	4383 Bathurst St
Marty Hiltz	Feb 7/09	50 Disera Dr
Burton Glenns	Feb 6/09	7027 Clover Rd
Ralph Milrod	Feb 3/09	Dub Nob 20
Anne Knopman	Feb 7/09	3560 Bathurst St
Zygmunt Niedzwiecki	Feb 7/09	5935 Bathurst St

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Cluzman, Mibeli	Jan. 30/09	34 Crispin Cres
Snitman, Estelle	Jan. 31/09	120 Promenade Cir
Yoselevsky, Amnon	Feb. 2/09	26 Lina Marra Dr
Craig, Bessie	Feb. 2/09	784 Centre St
Ohayon, Leon	Feb. 2/09	Private
Hauptman, Magdalena	Feb. 3/09	4350 Bathurst St
Goldfarb, Ivgenia	Feb. 3/09	541 Finch Ave. W.
Schwarz, Fred	Feb. 3/09	120 Promenade Cir
Karp, Azriel	Feb. 4/09	42 Robingrove Rd
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HEBREW BASIC

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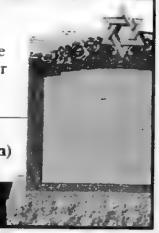

Coast to Coast

Survivor tracing centre opened

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Montreal Holocaust survivors and their descendants who want to know what happened to relatives with whom they lost contact or who died may now find their search easier.

The Canadian Red Cross and the Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors (CJCS) are collaborating to open what they say is Canada's first Holocaust Survivors' Tracing Centre.

At the centre, based at the CJCS, survivors can receive information about Red Cross services and fill out the necessary forms to launch an investigation. It is co-ordinated by CJCS staff member Mara Schneiderman, who oversees six trained volunteers. The service is free and confidential.

The Red Cross has for many years helped Jews and others seeking to reunite with family they were separated from during World War II, or to determine the circumstances of their deaths. But that service has not been used extensively in Quebec by the Jewish community, and was usually a long process before the advances in technology made obtaining information easier.

In the last few years, a significant number of records have also become public, most notably the archives of Nazi persecution at Bad Arelson, Germany. In 2006, its tens of millions of pieces of documentation were made readily accessible for the first time, and they have been digitized.

Housing the tracing centre at the CJCS Snowdon location will also be more convenient and familiar for survivors; the Red Cross Montreal office is on Nun's Island.

Red Cross spokesperson Myrian Marotte said only about five Holocaust survivors make inquiries about tracing relatives each year at its Montreal office.

"Our goal with the new centre is to increase the visibility of our service. It is estimated that we will get between 50 and 100 requests annually now," she said.

The service also includes providing certification for reparations or pensions. Marotte said the local Red Cross has had some success in reuniting relatives. For example, last spring, two sisters, not Jewish, one living here and the other in Russia, were put in contact with one another for the first time since the war, she said.

The tracing centre complements existing services for survivors at the CJCS, said Myra Giberovitch, co-ordinator of those services, which include a drop-in centre and assistance in making claims for reparations or other compensations, or obtaining emergency funds for which they may be eligible.

Until now, the CJCS has always referred anyone who asked about tracing to the Red Cross.

She said this is the first time the Red Cross has set up an off-site tracing centre in Canada.

The centre is open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, but appointments are required. Call 514-343-3529, ext. 7206, and leave a message for someone to get back to you. A brochure on the service is also available in a variety of languages.

The applications for the Red Cross to conduct a search ask for detailed information and run to about three pages, Giberovitch said, but the volunteers, who were trained by Red Cross staff who came up from Baltimore, can help in filling them out.

In the past, it might have taken a year or two for the Red Cross to obtain the information sought, but it is expected to be much quicker now. Although almost 64 years have passed since the end of the war, Giberovitch said there are still survivors who want to know more.

"In recent years, there have been stories in the media about people finding lost relatives. As the survivors enter the last stage of their lives, there is a desire among some to fill in the missing parts," she said.

"The service is not for everyone," she added. "Some survivors may not want to probe into the past, and have more or less accepted what happened. They don't want to dredge up painful memories, and they certainly should not feel obligated, nor should their kids push them."

Hamiltonian recognized for a life of social action

By ABIGAIL CUKIER
Special to the CJN

HAMILTON — After being named the City of Hamilton's 2008 Royal Bank Distinguished Citizen of the Year, Madeleine Levy reflected on a life of social action.

"I heard my mother's voice saying, "This is how we raised you,'" said the Ancaster, Ont., resident. "I was raised with the principles of tikkun olam. This was an affirmation of what these good deeds mean to the community.

"I believe you get opportunities and, if you seize them, we can all make a difference."

And seize them she does. Levy sits on the Hamilton Community Foundation board of directors, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board InterFaith Advisory Committee and the Bob Kemp Hospice fund development committee. She's on the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton's board of directors and was vice-chair of its 2007 campaign.

Levy is also a governing council member of the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, chair of the UN International Day of Holocaust and a member of the UJA Federation of Hamilton Holocaust Education Committee. She chairs the Hamilton Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program for high school students.

The Nazis killed all except for one member of Levy's family living in Romania during World War II.

She said her strong commitment to Holocaust education is justice for the six million Jews who died, as well as a way to foster tolerance and understanding.

"It's also out of reverence for the survivors living in our city. It's my obligation," she added.

Levy and her husband, Monte, helped bring books, propaganda documents, concentration camp letters and other artifacts to McMaster University, as part of the exhibit Anti-Semitism, Concentration Camps and Underground Resistance in World War II. The artifacts are on display until the end of March, and all materials will remain at the Mills Library for research purposes. The couple also plans to put their materials online to create a virtual museum.

Darrel Skidmore, CEO of the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton, was delighted when Levy received the citizen of the year honour.

"Madeleine has the ability to create bridges and build coalitions of disparate groups in the community," Skidmore said. "In Hamilton, which is so diverse, to have people who can create those kinds of relationships [and] can bring people together, is a huge asset.

"Madeleine has a genuine interest in all people across the city. She brings compassion to her role, as well as passion."

Levy is credited with building a relationship between Hamilton's oldest black church and the city's oldest synagogue, and raising funds for an elevator at Stewart Memorial Church and for repairs to the Torah scrolls at Temple Anshe Sholom.

She also worked with Festitalia organizers to bring, to the festival, a film about Italian hero Giorgio Perlasca, who saved more than 3,500 Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust.

Levy grew up in New York. Her grandmother fought to give women the right to vote, and in the 1960s, her mother went door-to-door encouraging people to vote.

"We always had discussions about social justice and speaking up," Levy says. "You can sit in your house and talk about it, but if you don't go out and act, silence is agreement."

When Levy moved to Hamilton in 1979, she became active in the National Council of Jewish Women and helped bring Ronald McDonald House to the city. In 2000, she became a co-ordinator of the local Out of the Cold program, which provides shelter and food for the homeless. She has also been involved in Hadassah and the Temple Anshe Sholom sisterhood.

"It's a difficult time to be Jewish, but we can't ignore the fundamental values of what we do as Jews – that's to educate and be part of the struggle for social justice. We are here to be stewards and care for our fellow human beings," Levy said.

"There is no shortage of opportunities. I wake up each day with so much energy. There are so many good works to be done."

Hamilton Mayor Fred Eisenberger, left, and Roger Howard, vice-president of Hamilton Commercial Markets for RBC Royal Bank, congratulate Madeleine Levy on receiving the City of Hamilton's 2008 Royal Bank Distinguished Citizen of the Year award.

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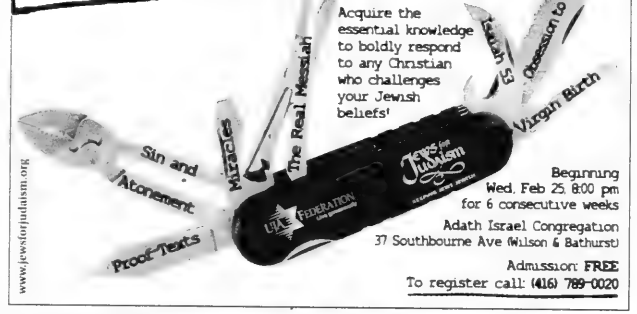

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MPs attracted to Israel in 2008

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

It seems Israel was the place to be for Canadian parliamentarians on diplomatic missions abroad last year, according to the ethics commissioner's annual list of sponsored travel.

The official report, released earlier this month, shows that 23 MPs visited Israel in 2008 – a number that will be revised to 26, as three members didn't file reports in time for inclusion on the list – on trips sponsored by the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC), twice the number that went on similar missions in 2007.

Lawmakers' trips to Israel outnumbered trips to other destinations nearly two to one in 2008.

In the past, all-expense-paid trips for MPs to Taiwan usually outstripped other destinations. However, only 12 MPs accepted trips there last year.

The report also shows that the CIC paid more than $160,000 to send the politicians on trips to Israel, often with their spouses. Half of those travelled to Israel in May to mark the 60th anniversary of the Jewish state.

Navdeep Bains

According to Shimon Fogel, the committee's CEO, the main reason for the upsurge was Israel's year-long anniversary celebrations, which prompted the CIC to add an extra mission last year.

Speaking to The CJN last week in the wake of ethics commissioner Mary Dawson's report, Fogel said the committee views the missions as essential to its mandate.

"Because they serve as the only way to translate images and perceptions – entirely skewed and run through multiple prisms and filters – that [MPs] get from 6,000 miles away, for them to be able to understand, assimilate and assess developments on the ground for themselves," he said.

He said the CIC tries to send an equal number of MPs from each federal party. Last year, nine Conservatives, eight Liberals, five Bloc Québécois and four NDP members were sponsored.

"This isn't a foreign-sponsored junket. Comparisons to some other trips offered to MPs are inappropriate so far as the nature of the trip goes," he said.

Fogel added that the CIC's sponsorship of MPs' trips to Israel is one of the only ways that MPs can get a comprehensive education about Israel. He noted that Canadian lawmakers have access to fewer resources to learn about foreign affairs compared to their U.S. counterparts.

"Unlike… legislators in the U.S. [who] get whacks of money to support independent travel anywhere they want to go… to understand issues that are important to constituents, to advance their work within their committees and so forth, our [MPs] get virtually no budget," he said.

Judy Wasylycia-Leis

"If it weren't for organizations like ours, [MPs] would have no capacity to benefit from direct, first-hand experiences in areas of the world that are clearly important to Canada in general and to constituents in particular."

Navdeep Bains, Liberal MP for Mississauga-Brampton South, went on one of the CIC trips last year. It was his first visit to Israel, and he said it was an "eye-opening" experience.

"We hear, read and debate about the issues that arise in the Middle East, especially with respect to Israel and its neighbours," Bains told The CJN last week. "It was a great opportunity for me… to learn and see first-hand the situation on the ground. I gained a very good perspective and… the trip was balanced. I was able to gain a new appreciation for the sensitivities, difficulties and challenges that exist in the region."

Speaking about the delicate nature of adding balance to the missions' itineraries, Fogel said his organization imposes no restrictions on participants, other than that they take part in all scheduled tours and events.

"We don't make any demands on MPs when they return, and we ensure that every different perspective benefits from exposure to the group as part of the program," he said.

He added that MPs "get the whole range of views from the Israeli political sector [and] Canadian perspectives in Israel from the two Canadian missions in Ramallah and Tel Aviv. They get multiple Palestinian perspectives, both from the formal PA- to UN-affiliated [groups] to pollsters, private citizens and journalists. They get academic input. These are exceptionally rich trips.

"Virtually every MP wants to go on the trip, and most signal in an explicit way their desire to participate in a CIC mission."

Judy Wasylycia-Leis, New Democrat MP for Winnipeg North, went on her second CIC trip to Israel last year. She said she continues to marvel at the country's ability to incorporate all political ideas and debate in a democratic fashion, despite the existential threats it faces.

"Israelis are working through these issues in a democratic way," she said, adding that her trips have allowed her and other NDP colleagues to ensure the party's federal caucus remains "balanced" on Israel.

"There's one self-evident truth [about Israel]… it has the right to exist and defend itself."

With files from JTA

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Seven years for 'jihad' firebombing too little, CJC says

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Seven years in prison is not a severe enough punishment for the man who pleaded guilty last week to the firebombing of two Montreal Jewish institutions in 2006 and 2007, Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) says.

Omar Bulphred

Omar Bulphred, 23, changed his plea to guilty on Feb. 12 to three counts of arson and two of uttering death threats in connection with throwing a Molotov cocktail at the entrance of the chassidic Skver community's Toldos Yakov Yosef school in Outremont in September 2006 and igniting a small explosive device outside the Snowdon Ben Weider Jewish Community Centre in April 2007, as well as setting fire to a car in an incident believed to be unrelated to the Jewish community.

The threat convictions pertain to two letters after the attacks claiming they were carried out to further the Islamic jihad.

Although the evidence against the Algerian-born Bulphred suggested he saw himself as acting for the cause of radical Islam, no links were established between him and any Islamist group.

"We're very disappointed," said CJC Quebec region vice-president Adam Atlas. "This sentence does not send a strong enough message to deter ardent terrorists like Bulphred. These were not ordinary crimes, but ones motivated by hate, and that is especially disturbing when children are targeted."

According to police wiretaps and surveillance, Bulphred researched bomb-making techniques and spoke of attacks on such sites as the U.S. Consulate in Montreal, a military base and a nuclear plant before targeting the Jewish school.

Quebec Court Judge Louise Bourdeau accepted the joint recommendation of the Crown and defence counsels of seven years in a federal penitentiary for Bulphred.

Four other charges that were laid against him when he was arrested in April 2007, along with accomplice Azim Ibragimov, were dropped, including conspiracy to kidnap and to commit armed robbery.

His 22 months in detention count for double, meaning Bulphred has 40 months left in his sentence. He will have to be released by law after serving two-thirds of the time.

Ibragimov, who pleaded guilty to the same counts, was sentenced in November to four years in jail.

Atlas said Bulphred should have received a stiffer sentence – 10 years in CJC's estimation – because he was the acknowledged mastermind of the attacks, which were clearly premeditated.

He also has a prior criminal record of pointing a pellet gun at someone, Atlas said, and he tried to assault a prison guard during his detention.

The maximum penalty he faced was 14 years behind bars.

Asked by the judge if he had anything to say, Bulphred, who appeared with hands and feet shackled, replied: "I offer my sincerest apology to the Jewish community. The acts were very cowardly."

Atlas is unconvinced of his sincerity. "He had a long time in jail to think about what he did… I think it's self-serving to apologize literally minutes before sentencing."

Atlas noted that Bulphred was "smirking" as the details of his misdeeds were read out. "He did not come across as genuinely remorseful."

Bulphred's lawyer's main argument for clemency was that Bulphred is ready to turn his life around and wants to go back to school.

As an indication that he has changed, the defence counsel said that his client had shaven off his beard and had re-established contact with his father in Algeria, which in Atlas's opinion points to how overwhelming the case was against Bulphred.

Unlike the judge in Ibragimov's sentencing, Bourdeau did not explicitly refer to Bulphred's crimes as acts of terrorism or rooted in a radical and violent ideology.

Entered into evidence were two letters by Ibragimov confessing to the arsons. In one he wrote after the attack on the Skver yeshiva, Ibragimov said: "In the name of Islamic jihad, we claim responsibility for the attack on the Jewish school, and other attacks are being planned against the Zionists. Free our brothers imprisoned in Toronto," an apparent reference to the arrests in the summer of 2006 of 17 suspects allegedly involved in an Islamist terror plot.

Ibragimov's lawyers argued that the letters were dictated by Bulphred.

"Judge Bourdeau's presentation was good in that she spoke of the necessity of sending a message that would prevent such future acts, and she did say that no one in a free and democratic society should have to live in fear, but she failed to use her discretion to render a sentence that expressed that," Atlas said.

He stressed that the pair's crimes have had a lasting negative impact on the Montreal Jewish community. "It has affected our daily lives. We are extra cautious now. Just sending our children to school means we have to plan for their security."

ECO-FRIENDLY SEDER: Students at Associated Hebrew Schools' Kamin Education centre in Thornhill took part in a traditional Tu b'Shvat seder with an environmental twist: all the items they used were biodegradable. They also read, sang, answered trivia questions and enjoyed fruits from Israel.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

FashionEAST fundraiser brings Israeli designer wear to Canada

By CLARE HILL
Special to The CJN

When Shira Webber walks down the street, it's inevitable that someone will stop her, point to her shoes, shirt or handbag and ask, "Where did you get that?"

And her answer is always the same, "Israel."

But now, Webber is aiming to bring more Israeli fashion to Canada than just what her arms can carry.

She and Cayla Spagat are co-executive directors of FashionEAST. The two-day charity event at Toronto's Design Exchange, starting Feb. 21, will showcase signature pieces from Israel's most talented fashion designers.

The event features a cocktail gala and runway show on Saturday, hosted by Fashion Television's Jeanne Beker, and then a sale of various fashions and accessories on Sunday.

Some of the funds raised will be donated to the Leaders of Tomorrow fund, which provides extracurricular cultural programming for more than 300 Israeli youths between the ages of six and 18 who are at risk.

The rest of the money will go to the Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation, to be used to support Israeli performers who participate in the Canadian arts community and help fund scholarships for Israeli arts students who want exposure outside of Israel.

"It was sort of a no-brainer," Webber says of her idea for the event, which was conceived as she and Spagat were walking through Tel Aviv during one of the Birthright Israel trips each was leading last May.

"We started talking about how wonderful Israeli fashion is [and how] there has to be some way to bring what Israel has to offer to Canada," says Spagat, the cultural affairs director at the Israeli consulate in Toronto.

Israeli designers just haven't had the opportunity for exposure in the Canadian market, says Webber, the outreach co-ordinator for the Birthright Israel Alumni Community.

"They're ahead of their time," she says, adding that she has to limit herself to the number of items she brings back after each visit.

And the fashion, accessible to women of all ages, definitely has a "wow" factor, Webber says.

"It's sort of au couture without the Prada price tag," Spagat adds.

"A lot of it is very unique, that you wouldn't see someone walking by on the street wearing. It's all pretty high-quality fabrics. You won't find run-of-the-mill clothing," she says.

Anat Taiber is one of the designers who will be providing a selection of pieces for FashionEAST.

She is the only designer involved in the event currently living in Canada. The other 21 designers are shipping hundreds of signature pieces from Israel, with the event showcasing 10 clothing designers, eight jewelry designers, two shoe designers and two leather designers in total.

Taiber, a former interior designer, will be providing seven different looks from her line ANATA, including dresses and coats. She says her designs centre on bold fabrics and cuts that compliment women's figures.

"The dresses are very flattering on the body... The shape is amazing on," she says, adding that most Israeli fashion fits like a glove and is more European in terms of its lightness.

Entertainment Tonight Canada's host Cheryl Hickey and ET Canada correspondent Rosey Edeh have both worn Taiber's well-fitting designs on air, as well as Tara Spencer-Nairn, an actor in the sitcom Corner Gas.

While Taiber works with private boutiques in Toronto, such as Zola and Poa Studio, she says she isn't aware of any other Israeli designers in Canada.

"If someone wants to sell outside the country, they're selling in the U.S. They have more room in New York, for example, to expose themselves," she says.

But she hopes FashionEAST might help change that and show Canadians the talent Israeli designers have to offer.

Israeli fashion has remained a hidden gem because the issues of the Israeli conflict are at the forefront of people's minds, Webber says.

Some of the greatest design schools are located in Israel, Spagat says, including the Shenkar College of Engineering and Design, which she says is one of the best in the Middle East.

Anat Taiber, one of the designers who will be featured at FashionEAST, said her designs, shown in these images, are "very flattering on the body."

Both Webber and Spagat were inspired not only by the talent of Israeli designers, but by how much Birthright participants appreciate its fashion.

"It's very evident to see their reaction to the talent, the creativity. It's a huge part of Israeli culture, so to have it offered here in Canada is a huge cornerstone of the event," Webber says.

Part of their jobs as Birthright leaders is to keep the participants involved in Jewish and Israeli culture once they return to Canada.

"It's really easy for Birthright Israel participants to be enamoured while they're [in Israel]. But there's a disconnect when they get back, and that is why it is so important that we offer events and programs that target their interests, so that they want to get involved and in turn help build a stronger community," Webber says, adding that there are more than 60 Birthright alumni volunteers for FashionEAST.

But it wasn't just the volunteers who were behind the event.

"Every designer that we approached was more than enthralled with this opportunity," says Webber.

And to have the support of Beker, Canada's biggest fashion icon, Spagat says, is invaluable to their cause.

"The fact that she recognizes what is available in Israel signifies the importance of what we're trying to do with FashionEAST."

FashionEAST's website address is www.fashioneast.ca.

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Election winners and losers

By URIEL HEILMAN
JTA

Analysis

In the chaos of the days after Israel's election, the possibilities for who will lead Israel's next government, and with what sort of coalition, seem endless.

However, if the parties are categorized by ideology, the noteworthy consequences of this election immediately become clear:

• Victory for the right wing

First and foremost, this election was a triumph for the right wing. Right-wing parties (not including the religious parties), picked up 18 seats in the 120-member Knesset. Left-wing parties lost eight seats. This analysis considers Labor, Kadima and Meretz left-wing parties, and Yisrael Beiteinu, Likud, Jewish Home and National Union right-wing parties.

Things look even worse for the left if the religious parties are counted as right wing – they are, although their major concerns are religious in nature – and if Kadima is counted as a centrist rather than a leftist party.

Kadima fits in the left-wing category because Tzipi Livni's approach to Arab-Israeli affairs is indistinguishable from that of Labor's. In a party without any clear ideology, the Kadima primary race last September essentially was a contest between a Kadima Laborite, Livni, and a Kadima Likudnik, Shaul Mofaz. The Laborite won.

Of course, the old distinctions between right and left no longer apply in Israel. All major parties, including Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu, favour a two-state solution with the Palestinians. Where they differ is how to achieve that solution, how quickly to accomplish it and in slight variations over the contours of the Palestinian state.

The primary difference between left and right in this election was that the left believes a two-state solution can be achieved now, whereas the right believes it's not possible now, given the radicalism and divisions among the Palestinians.

• Netanyahu's comeback

While Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu didn't do as well as some polls two months ago projected, his party still registered the biggest gains overall, and by a lot. Likud picked up 15 seats, rising to 27 from the 12 it won in a lacklustre showing in 2006.

• Kadima did not gain

Kadima actually lost ground last week. In the last election, in 2006, incumbent Prime Minister Ehud Olmert won 29 seats for his party. He had been prime minister for just under three months, having taken over when former prime minister Ariel Sharon suffered a massive stroke.

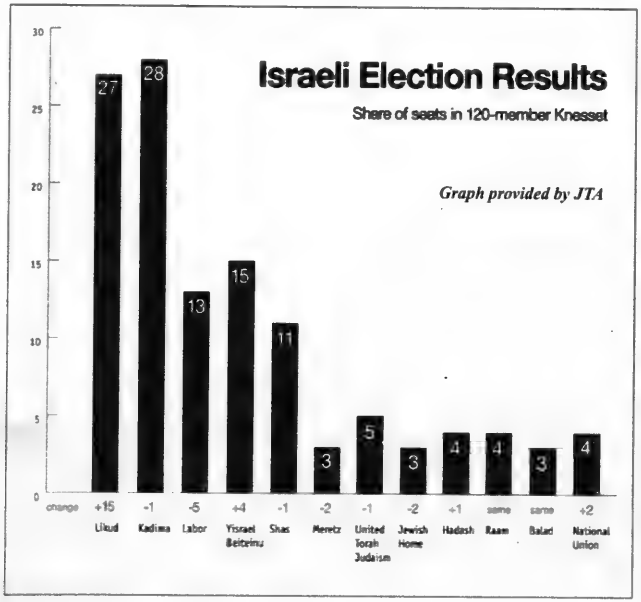
With Livni at the helm, Kadima captured 28 seats, one less than Olmert. To be fair, even this amount is remarkable given that her party's prime minister launched a failed war in Lebanon and, after two years of dilly-dallying, a war of indeterminate success in Gaza – to say nothing of the political corruption scandal that resulted in his resignation.

It appears that voters associated those failures with Olmert rather than Kadima or Livni herself, who served as Olmert's foreign minister throughout. It's also likely that traditional left-wing supporters of Labor, knowing that Labor had no chance of winning the election, threw their support behind Livni as the left-wing candidate of choice for prime minister.

• Arab parties grew

Israel's Arab parties picked up two seats, increasing their Knesset representation by 20 per cent. Balad, whose erstwhile leader, Azmi Bishara, fled Israel while under investigation for treason for passing on information about Israeli army positions to Hezbollah during the 2006 war, picked up one seat. Hadash, a mixed Jewish-Arab party, picked up another. The Knesset's third Arab party, Ra'am, held its own.

The gains, which came despite calls by some Arab Israeli community leaders to boycott Israel's elections, can be explained by the strong Arab opposition to Lieberman, whose positions threaten Israel's Arab citizens. Also, they can be attributed to a simple demographic fact: the Arab population of Israel is growing at a much faster rate than Israel's Jewish population.



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Likud may offer top spots to Kadima, Lieberman

By MAZAL MUALEM, YAIR ETTINGER, LILY GALILI AND YOSSI VERTER
Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu was expected to offer the finance portfolio to Yisrael Beiteinu Avigdor Lieberman in order to pull the latter immediately into pledging to join a government under his authority.

Netanyahu was then expected to ask Kadima leader Tzipi Livni to join his coalition, and may have offered Livni the portfolio of foreign affairs and defence to Shaul Mofaz. Former prime minister Ariel Sharon offered Labor's Shimon Peres and Benjamin Ben Eliezer these portfolios in 2001, immediately after he was elected prime minister in a similar bid to forge a quick coalition.

The Likud leader told Ha'aretz last Wednesday that he planned to tell opposing parties to put aside their political differences and join his government, for the sake of national unity.

"I plan to create a wide coalition and I will tell the other parties, 'If you're worried about national interest, lay aside your political interests and join a government under my leadership,'" he said.

Despite her slim chance of being able to form a government, Livni on Feb. 11 pledged to make every effort to do so "for my voters." However, she said she would not pay "an exorbitant price" for other parties' agreement to join her.

Livni, who met Lieberman in Jerusalem on Feb. 11 in her own bid to build a coalition, said she could offer Lieberman support for two issues that are crucial to him: passing a law that would enable couples barred from religious Jewish marriage to marry in a civil union and making changes to the system of government.

At the very least, Livni is intent on convincing the Yisrael Beiteinu head not to recommend any party leader other than her to form the coalition.

Netanyahu, who commands a right-wing haredi bloc of 65 Knesset members, cannot support either issue due to opposition from the haredi parties.

"I can also put together a coalition that is united around the peace process. Netanyahu doesn't want that, and couldn't do it even if he did, with his right-wing partners," Livni said.

A day of coalition talks made it clear to Livni that Netanyahu had a considerable advantage in forming a government. However, she said she was determined to try, mainly for the sake of all the left-wing voters who abandoned Labor and Meretz and voted for her.

Livni said that if she failed to put together a coalition within a few days, she would have to decide between joining the opposition or a government headed by Netanyahu.

If Lieberman recommends Livni to President Shimon Peres as his choice for forming the government, she would immediately lose her recommendation from Labor and Meretz, political sources said.

Six months ago, with a bloc of 70 centre and left-wing Knesset members, Livni failed to form a coalition. Sources said she would not be able to do so with a 44-strong bloc consisting of Kadima, Meretz and Labor, or a hypothetical 43-strong bloc of Kadima and Yisrael Beiteinu.

Livni on Feb. 11 consulted with senior Kadima officials to decide on how they could act to torpedo a right-wing bloc led by Netanyahu.

Cabinet ministers Mofaz, Meir Sheetrit, Roni Bar-On and Haim Ramon and Knesset Speaker Dalia Itzik were among those in attendance.

Also on Feb. 11, Mofaz met with Shas leader Eli Yishai, who told him that Shas would join Netanyahu's coalition.

Despite Livni's vow to continue trying to forge a government, some Kadima officials have said Netanyahu would likely be the next prime minister. "We won the battle, but lost the war," said one minister.

According to the sources, Livni and Netanyahu are playing a complex game – she is unwilling to give up, and as long as she digs in her heels, he is forced to look to his "natural" coalition partners.

The more Netanyahu promises to the haredi Shas and far-right Habayit Hayehudi and National Union, the harder it would be for him to add Kadima to the coalition, and the harder it will be for Kadima to join him.

Kadima last week held preliminary talks with Likud to discuss the terms of a possible partnership.

Before offering any portfolios to Kadima, Netanyahu had to deal with the demands of Lieberman, Shas and United Torah Judaism in exchange for joining his coalition.

Sources close to Labor leader Ehud Barak said that he would take his party into opposition after its crushing election defeat.

The announcement came after almost all of Labor's MKs made it clear to Barak that they would not go with him to Netanyahu's government.

Lieberman loyalty proposal finds support in U.S.

By BEN HARRIS
JTA

NEW YORK — As Yisrael Beiteinu vaulted into third place in Israel's elections, capturing 15 Knesset seats, several American Jewish organizational leaders defended the party's controversial leader, Avigdor Lieberman.

Some liberal Israeli and Jewish groups have condemned Lieberman as a fascist – the left-wing Meretz Party even compared him to the late far-right Austrian politician Joerg Haider – for his proposal to require Israeli citizens to sign an oath of allegiance to the Jewish state in a bid to curtail Israeli Arab political power.

But the Anti-Defamation League, an organization that is quick to spot instances of discrimination, says Lieberman is right to be concerned about apparent acts of disloyalty by Israeli Arabs.

Abraham Foxman, the ADL's national director, noted with concern the trips Arab Israeli Knesset members made to enemy states and expressions of solidarity with Hamas by Israeli Arabs during Israel's recent military operation in the Gaza Strip.

Avigdor Lieberman
[Israel photo]

"There were a lot of people who said, 'Hey, that's disloyal,'" Foxman told JTA. "That's what he's talking about. He's not saying expel them. He's not saying punish them."

Lieberman, 50, has proposed requiring a loyalty oath as a condition of Israeli citizenship. Those who refuse – Arab or Jewish – would have their citizenship revoked, though they'd be permitted to remain in the country as permanent residents.

"Arabs have all their rights in Israel, but they have no right to Eretz Yisrael," Lieberman said at the recent Herzliya Conference, an annual summit on Israeli state and security.

Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, said he found Lieberman's proposal "legitimate."

Foxman promised to speak out if Lieberman advanced any legislative proposals not in keeping with the spirit of Israeli democracy, noting that the ADL had criticized his proposals in the past.

In 2006, the ADL issued a statement saying it was "disturbed" by Lieberman's call for the execution of Arab legislators who met with Hamas leaders.

Marc Stern, the acting co-executive director of the American Jewish Congress, noted that American Jews historically have been skeptical of or against loyalty oaths. He also pointed out that Lieberman's proposal would require all citizens to take loyalty oaths, not merely oaths by those seeking to become citizens.

Stern called Lieberman's proposal "not a serious solution to a very serious problem."

Ori Nir, a spokesperson for Americans for Peace Now, said that expressions of solidarity by Israeli Arabs with the enemies of Israel should be considered protected political speech, and that asking Israeli Arabs to sign a loyalty oath only would alienate them further.

"Once you put them on the spot, by the mere act of doing that you're going to alienate them in such a way that you will create security challenges to the state," Nir said. "You will put them on a spot where they will have to make some sort of a decision. That may lead some of them to a situation where they would say, 'You know what, the heck with you.'"

Israel Briefs

Mauritania closes mission

Mauritania has closed its embassy in Israel, the head of the country's military junta said. Gen. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz said last week's move doesn't mean Mauritania, a predominantly Muslim country, is severing relations with Israel. Last month the Arab League country, one of three to have diplomatic relations with Israel, said it would suspend ties due to the military operation in Gaza. Thousands of Mauritanians protested the operation in the country's capital, Nouakchott.

Amnesty raps Hamas

Amnesty International issued a report on Hamas violence against Palestinians during Israel's military operation in Gaza. In its report, the human rights group states that at least two dozen men were killed by Hamas gunmen, and many more were kneecapped or otherwise tortured during and after Israel's military operation. It also confirms reports that some victims were executed in hospitals where they were being treated. Amnesty sent a fact-finding team to Gaza once the ceasefire was in force. Human rights groups have documented cases of execution and the torture of supporters of Fatah, the party led by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Arms ship detained

Iran denied that a ship detained by Cyprus was carrying weapons to be delivered to Gaza. The ship, flying a Cypriot flag, was stopped and boarded last month by the U.S. Navy in the Red Sea. The U.S. Navy claimed to have found weapons on board, but could not confiscate them because of international agreements. Israeli media reported that officials suspected the ship of carrying weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon or Hamas in Gaza. The boat's captain ignored a U.S. order to dock in Egypt for further inspections and instead headed for Cyprus. Cypriot officials wouldn't allow the ship to continue to Syria, its ostensible final destination, but allowed it to do so last Friday after ordering its cargo removed.

Holocaust denial 'intolerable,' Pope tells Jews

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.

Pope Benedict XVI, trying to defuse a controversy over his rehabilitation of a bishop who denies the Holocaust, told Jewish leaders on Feb. 12 that "any denial or minimization of this terrible crime is intolerable."

The Pope made the comments in his first meeting with Jews since the controversy over traditionalist Bishop Richard Williamson began late last month. The Vatican decided to lift Williamson's excommunication, despite the bishop's denial of the full extent of the Holocaust and statement that there were no gas chambers.

Pope Benedict XVI

"The hatred and contempt for men, women and children that was manifested in the Shoah was a crime against humanity. This should be clear to everyone, especially to those standing in the tradition of the Holy Scriptures," the Pope told a group of about 60 Jewish leaders visiting the Vatican.

The German Pope recalled his own visit to Auschwitz in 2006 and, in some of the strongest words he has ever spoken about the Holocaust and relations with Jews, he said: "It is my fervent prayer that the memory of this appalling crime will strengthen our determination to heal the wounds that for too long have sullied relations between Christians and Jews."

He repeated the prayer that the late Pope John Paul II used when he visited Jerusalem's Western Wall in 2000 and asked forgiveness from Jews for Christians who had persecuted them in past centuries. "I now make his prayer my own," he added in his own words.

"This terrible chapter in our history [the Holocaust] must never be forgotten," the Pope told the Jewish delegation from the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, adding he hoped relations between Catholics and Jews can now grow stronger.

The Pope also confirmed that he plans to visit Israel. Vatican sources say the trip is expected for May.

Catholic-Jewish relations have been tense since Jan. 24,when Benedict readmitted four renegade ultra-conservative traditionalist bishops to the faith in an attempt to heal a schism that began in 1988 when they were ordained without Vatican permission.

The Jewish delegation to the Vatican was led by New York Rabbi Arthur Schneier, a Holocaust survivor. His synagogue is to host the pontiff during a visit to New York in April.

Before last week's meeting, Rabbi Schneier said he wanted to thank the Pope for his commitment to strong Catholic-Jewish ties, calling the controversy over Bishop Williamson a temporary setback to relations.

In an interview broadcast Jan. 21, Bishop Williamson told Swedish television: "I believe there were no gas chambers." He also said no more than 300,000 Jews died in Nazi camps.

The Vatican says Benedict didn't know about the bishop's views when he lifted the excommunications last month in a move that has drawn much criticism from the international Jewish community and world leaders.

Germany's Central Council of Jews is breaking off contact with the Catholic Church, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged the Pope to make a stronger statement against Holocaust denial.

Bishop Williamson has apologized to the German-born Pope for stirring controversy, but he hasn't repudiated his comments. In fact, he repeated his doubts about the Shoah in an interview this month in Der Spiegel magazine.

He told the German publication that he'd have to do research before he could consider complying with the Pope's demand. The English-born bishop, who lives in Argentina, told Der Spiegel he would only reconsider his views given convincing evidence.

In response, a French human rights group, the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism, said it will press charges against him for "contesting crimes against humanity" and denying the Holocaust in his comments to Der Spiegel.

Meanwhile, the bishop has been fired as head of the La Reja seminary near Buenos Aires. In a statement announcing his dismissal, Father Christian Bouchacourt, head of the Latin American chapter of the Catholic Society St. Pius X – the right-wing group that rejects reforms of the Second Vatican Council, including better relations with Jews – said that his "statements do not in any way reflect the position of our congregation."

The Pius X society has also kicked out an Italian member who publicly sided with the bishop. Floriano Abrahamowicz said he doesn't believe gas chambers at death camps were used to kill people.

With files from JTA

Educator support group to shut down

By JACOB BERKMAN
JTA

NEW YORK — The Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education will close at the end of this month.

Last week's e-mail announcement came a month after CAJE, the New York-based organization that for 30 years has been the primary professional development organization for congregational and Hebrew school teachers, said it would not hold its annual conference.

CAJE said in the e-mail that it could no longer survive in this economic climate.

Its annual conference on Jewish education drew some 1,000 educators, but in January, CAJE said it would not hold this year's event because local Jewish agencies could not afford to send teachers to participate and the organization could not drum up enough funding to pay for the conference.

Seymour Epstein

In the e-mail, CAJE said it was seeking funds to pay off some $500,000 in debt incurred to hold conferences over the past several years.

"It is a major tragedy for Jewish education, and I think it will be missed," CAJE executive director Jeffrey Lasday told JTA.

"Now we have to look at how local and national organizations can be working closer together. My colleagues at other agencies say their agencies are closing down or losing staff. This is an opportunity to rethink how we work together to better education with national and local organizations," he said. "Now is the time to rethink the whole thing."

Seymour Epstein, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's senior vice-president for the Mercaz and a CAJE founder, said the imminent closing is "a serious loss."

In addition to giving educators in Jewish schools "a sense of community across the border" through its annual conferences, CAJE produced "wonderful [resource] materials," said Epstein.

The organization – which has had 136 Canadian members since 2005, including about 50 in the past year – is working closely with the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA) in the hope that there will be "a CAJE-type conference" in 2010, Lasday told The CJN.

With files from Frances Kraft

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite our readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes. They should not exceed 2,000 words.

We must receive your submissions no later than Friday, March 12. E-mail submissions are preferred, but works can also be sent by mail or brought to our office.
E-mail: **info@cjnews.com.** Mail: 1500 Don Mills Rd., Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4.
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Conservative rabbis want Chief Rabbinate privatized

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The Conservative rabbinical association has passed a resolution calling for for the dissolution of Israel's Chief Rabbinate as a governmental organization.

Instead, the resolution calls on Israel to privatize the Chief Rabbinate and concludes by calling for financial resources to be allocated equitably to the major streams of Judaism.

"In general, there's a sense of the need to move toward a greater separation of synagogue and state," said Toronto's Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, one of about 300 rabbis and one of about 10 Canadian rabbis to attend last week's annual Rabbinical Assembly convention in Jerusalem.

In a phone interview from Israel last Thursday, Rabbi Frydman-Kohl said that there's "a sense of alienation in Israel on the part of the vast majority of Israelis, certainly of moderately traditional and, more so, secular Israelis from the chief rabbinate, which is also connected to an alienation from much of traditional Judaism."

Liberal North American rabbis have had a number of squabbles over the years with Israeli religious authorities, who wield state power through their control of several hot-button issues, including marriage and conversion. The rabbinate, which is made up largely of haredi rabbis, has even run afoul of liberal Orthodox rabbis in the United States, who accuse it of taking unnecessarily strict and authoritarian religious positions.

Rabbi Martin Lockshin, a York University Jewish studies professor who has Orthodox smichah, told The CJN that at many points in history, the Israeli Chief Rabbinate was "a wonderful institution that was a source of great inspiration to many Jews."

He said that, from one perspective, the resolution "seems very sad," but he said he also understands "the frustration that many people are feeling with the Chief Rabbinate as it is constituted."

Rabbi Lockshin said he believes there has to be "a further separation of synagogue and state in the State of Israel."

"I'd be in favour of civil marriages and divorces," he added. "If the Chief Rabbinate is not controlling areas of personal status, it can be a force for intellectual and religious growth for the Jewish people."

Instead of marrying under the auspices of the Chief Rabbinate, Rabbi Frydman-Kohl said, a significant number of Israelis are living together or going abroad to get married.

In some cases, couples have a civil marriage abroad and return to Israeli to be married under Masorti (Conservative) auspices, he said.

"People are trying in many ways. They want to be Jewish, and they may not be Jewish completely in the traditional way. We need to find a way to make them part of the large majority and find a way that they can marry within Israel, or there will be more problems down the road."

The Rabbinical Assembly took up more than a dozen resolutions at the convention.

Among them was one on marriage and another on conversion. Draft versions, respectively, called for the Israeli government to license rabbis from all branches of Judaism to officiate at weddings and to recognize Masorti conversions performed in Israel. Final versions were not available at press time.

With files from Ben Harris, JTA

Mass. college divests from six Israeli firms

JTA

BOSTON — Hampshire College is believed to be the first American college or university to divest from companies deemed to be supporting Israel's occupation of the West Bank.

The board of trustees of the Amherst, Mass., liberal arts college approved a proposal on Feb. 7 that would divest school funds from six companies deemed to be complicit in the Israeli occupation – Caterpillar, United Technologies, General Electric, ITT Corp., Motorola and Terex.

The university, a private school with 1,350 students, said the move was part of a largerreview that led to divestment from more than 200 companies that violated that college's standards for social responsibility.

The college emphasized that the Feb. 7 decision made no reference to any particular country, but it acknowledged the review was initiated by a student group, Students for Justice in Palestine.

Divestment efforts and academic boycotts of Israel have largely failed, both in the United States and abroad. A divestment push at Harvard University drew a rebuke from Lawrence Summers, then the university president and current Obama administration official.

שיאר נינו

גידי קורן וחברים

מה יהיה

אפשר להתאכזב מתוצאות הבחירות בישראל ואפשר לשמוח- כל אחד לפי נטיית ליבו ולפי ראייתו הפוליטית- אבל דבר אחד ברור- יש בישראל דמוקרטיה אמיתית. בישראל, כמספר האנשים כן מספר הדעות- אבל בסופו של דבר- יודעים כולם שהם יצטרכו לשבת ולהתדיין ולהתפשר, ולבנות קואליציה שמתחשבת בדעות שונות. לדאבון הלב החמאס הביא למותה המוקדם של האמונה שאפשר יהיה די מהר להידבר ולהגיע לפתרון ארוך טווח עם הפלשתינאים. כיום ברור אפילו לשמאלנים הטבעיים שאין מה לדבר עם מי שמאמין ושואף לחורבן מדינת ישראל. מטבע העניין זה מחזק את הימין- זוהי תגובה אנושית ומאד ברורה.

האתגר האמיתי של ישראל הוא לא לתת לגל הימין להרוס את זכויות האדם. דוגמה מבישה לכך היתה בנסיון הכנסת להוציא מהבחירות את המפלגות הערביות, מעשה נואל שרק בית המשפט העליון יכול היה לעצור. צריך לקוות שאביגדור ליברמן לא יאלץ בארבע השנים הקרובות את בית המשפט להיות למגן הדמוקרטיה כל שבוע מחדש. אבל שישאר בינינו.

הוואי

את הבחירות לכנסת בליתי בהוואי, שם הייתי אחראי על קלפי של לוויתנים. חלקם קפצו ימינה, חלקם שמאלה, אבל בגלל שהוואי נמצאת בדיוק שנים עשר אזורי זמן מישראל, נפתחו הקלפיות כאן בדיוק כשהן נסגרו בארץ, וכך לברישים של הוואי היתה השפעה הרבה יותר גדולה מגודלם המספרי.

בשהותי בהוואי מצאתי מסמכים חשובים שלדעתי משנים את ההיסטוריה כפי שלמדנו בבית הספר. לנו סיפרו שהמרגלים שאלו את משה לאן ללכת והוא, בגלל גמגומו, רצה להגיד "קנדה" אבל הם הבינו "כנען". לפי מה שהבנתי כאן- משה אמר בבירור "הוואי", אבל בגלל שזה היה שנים רבות לפני גלוי אמריקה המרגלים לא הבינו וחשבו שהוא אמר "הלוואי". ההפסד כולו שלנו.

האם אנחנו צריכים להצביע

יש מדינות רבות שאזרחיהן יכולים להצביע בכל מקום, בתנאי שיש להם דרכון תקף. וכך מצביעים בטורונטו אזרחי ארה"ב ואיטליה, ופוליטיקאים איטלקיים אפילו מגיעים הנה לנסות לשכנע מצביעים איטלקיים שחיים בטורונטו כבר חמישים שנה להצביע עבורם.

בישראל רשאי להצביע רק מי שיש לו כתובת בישראל ושמופיע בפנקס הבוחרים, אבל הוא צריך לטוס ארצה. מעטים מממשים את זכותם זו, או בשל ההוצאה הכרוכה והבלאגן, או משום שהם סבורים שזה לא עניינם, או אפילו לא זכותם, להצביע במקום שבחרו שלא לגור בו.

מאוד מעניין שדווקא ישראל, שאיננה נותנת לאזרח ישראלי שאינו חי בה להצביע, עומדת על כך שילדיהם, אפילו שלא נולדו בישראל, ייכנסו ארצה עם דרכון ישראלי. יש בשניות הזאת משהו מאוד לא כנה ואפילו לא הגון.

לי אישית אין בעייה עם כל זה, כי אני סבור שרק מי שחי שם פיזית צריך להשתתף בהחלטות הרות הגורל של מי שיוביל אותו. אינני חושב שזכותי להצביע כל עוד אני לא חי שם את רוב השנה. אבל אני גם יכול להבין את מי שמרגיש אחרת.

רק שישאר בינינו.

New adaptation of Miss Julie focuses on racial tension

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

CanStage is celebrating Black History Month with the Canadian premiere of Miss Julie: Freedom Summer.

This adaptation, which was nominated for the LA Drama Critics Circle Award, was written and directed by Stephen Sachs. It was inspired by Miss Julie, the controversial August Strindberg classic written 121 years ago.

Miss Julie pitted class, gender and sexuality against shifting moralities. Although today it is considered an extraordinary piece of work, it was banned from public performance until the early 20th century because of its scandalous nature.

In this new adaptation, Sachs throws race into the mix. It is set in 1964 in Greenwood, Miss., just two days after president Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, when racial tensions were really high.

"The issue of racial tension is much more relevant to me today than the original issue of class struggle, which Strindberg wrote about in his play in 1888," explains Sachs, 49, the Los Angeles-based writer/director.

"Race is so much a part of the DNA of my country and of Canada, and I think of many countries today. Racial tension is something I get and immediately feel as an American – it is so much a part of who we are, something we've grown up with and fought over and struggled with as a country. To me, adapting the play and making it about racial and sexual tension made it something I could immediately identify with."

Play is also about sexual power struggle

Miss Julie: Freedom Summer premiered in Los Angeles in February 2007 at the award-winning Fountain Theatre which Sachs co-founded in 1990 and of which he is the artistic director.

Julie (Caroline Cave), the daughter of a wealthy Superior Court judge, begins a dangerous liaison with John (Kevin Hanchard), her father's African-American chauffeur, shattering societal barriers and lives. John's fiancée, Christine (Raven Dauda), the household cook, must take a stand. Tragedy becomes unavoidable.

"The thing that makes it more pertinent, exciting and relevant than when we originally produced it in Los Angeles is that we elected a black president," Sachs says. "When we first launched this play, I don't think any of us would have imagined it possible. [This] makes the play even more relevant.

"When you think about the characters in this play in 1964, it was a time in our country when many of the citizens in the south were denied the right to vote because they were black, and now, a little more than 45 years later, we have elected a black president. The play gives us the opportunity to look back and see how far we've come, and also to be reminded, I think, how far we need to go, because there are still hidden prejudices in all of us."

Julie begins a dangerous liaison with her father's black driver in this new adaptation of Miss Julie, now playing at Bluma Appel Theatre.

He says Miss Julie: Freedom Summer is about more than just racial tension, it is also about a sexual power struggle. It is about the allure of what is considered taboo and the need to cross the barrier lines between men and women, black and white, rich and poor.

Sachs wants to shake audiences up by having them experience something compelling, riveting, disturbing and funny, and by getting them to think and to be aroused, because it a very sexy play with a lot of sensuality and violence.

"I'm always drawn to material about the feelings of the other in society. I'm drawn to stories of conflict, struggle and overcoming obstacles, which I think is very much part of Jewish tradition," he says.

Sachs' plays include Central Avenue, Open Window and Sweet Nothing in my Ear, which he adapted as a CBS television movie in 2008 starring Jeff Daniels and Marlee Matlin. He has also directed works by internationally acclaimed playwright Athol Fugard and others. Sachs will soon be directing Fugard's newest play, Coming Home, at the Fountain, followed by the Los Angeles premiere of Shining City by Conor McPherson

The former stage, movie and television actor says there are times when he most enjoys directing plays, but when he gets too involved with the business of running the theatre he enjoys going into writer mode.

"I really do enjoy the solitude of writing a play and being able to focus on that. It's immensely rewarding to be able to see the play come alive on stage. It is thrilling to see the play do well."

Miss Julie: Freedom Summer is a co-production of The Canadian Stage Company and Vancouver Playhouse Theatre. It runs until March 7 at the Bluma Appel Theatre, 27 Front St. E. For tickets call 416-368-3110 or visit www.canstage.com.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

MONTREAL WRITER WINS PLAYWRITING COMPETITION

Montreal playwright and librettist **Alexis Diamond** has won the 2008 Canadian Jewish Playwriting contest for her play Strange Land, which focuses on a Jewish family's struggle to survive the Montreal anti-Semitic riot of 1942. The prize is a professionally directed and acted workshop in a Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre Between Stages Playwright's Reading in the fall of 2009.

The MNJCC has been producing theatrical readings in a workshop environment since 1995. **Dave Carley** (A View from the Roof, 1995) and **Brandon Marlon** (The Bleeding Season, 2008) are among numerous playwrights who have won an opportunity to hear their works read by professional actors and receive feedback from an informal audience.

Three previous winners have been published and have hit the commercial stages: Einstein's Gift by **Vern Thiessen**, Sara's Cave by **Don Molnar**, and Yahrzeit by **Alex Poch Goldin**.

* * *

Chai Tea in Richmond Hill: The Toronto Jewish Film Festival presents Dans La Vie (Two Ladies), a French comedy (2007) about a cantankerous elderly Jewish woman whose son arranges an Arab woman to be her caregiver when he leaves town. Although sparks fly and disaster seems impending, the women exchange stories and discover they have more in common than they thought. "A sensitive and hopeful portrayal of cross-cultural camaraderie." Subtitles. $15. Richmond Hill SilverCity, 8725 Yonge St. Sunday, March 1. Chai Tea 1 p.m., film 2 p.m. 416-967-1528, www.tjff.com

* * *

The Dybbuk on Bathurst: Teatron Theatre presents a new production of S. Anski's The Dybbuk. The play offers a love story of a different kind, where otherworldly forces are at work in a simple village in eastern Europe. A staple of the Yiddish Theatre, the romantic drama has become a classic of the modern theatre.

The new adaptation by Teatron artistic director **Ari Weisberg** follows the text of the original Habima production, including the poems by Israel's national poet, **Chaim Nachman Bialik**. The poems were translated by Weisberg and set to music by **Yehudit Shier Weisberg**. "I'm excited to have the opportunity to direct this play, which I read and worked on at Queen's University so many years ago," Ari Weisberg said.

The 21-actor cast is led by **Howard Jerome** as Reb Azrielke and features **Mark Albert** as Sender, **Ron Boyd** as the Messenger, **Jonah Hundert** as Chonnon and **Sarah Illiatovitch-Goldman** as Leye. $18 to $44. Leah Posluns Theatre, 4588 Bathurst St. Feb. 25 to March 8. 416-616-5350, www.teatrontheatre.com.

* * *

Names in the News: Oz Noy, celebrated guitarist from Israel, performed earlier this month with New Yorkers **Will Lee** (bass) and **Anton Fig** (drums), both of The Late Show with David Letterman, at the Rex Hotel's Jazz and Blues Bar on Queen St. W.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Soulpepper opened its 2009 theatrical season last week with **Tom Stoppard's** Travesties, based on the supposition that **James Joyce**, **Vladimir Lenin** and **Tristan Tzara** met in Zurich during World War I. Runs to March 21. Subsequent offerings include Glengarry Glen Ross by **David Mamet**, Loot by **Joe Orton**, Awake and Sing by **Clifford Odets**, Of the Fields Lately by **David French**, Under Milk Wood by **Dylan Thomas** and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? by **Edward Albee**. 416-866-8666, www.soulpepper.ca

• Music Talk with **Jordan Klapman** features the topic "Barry Mann & Cynthia Weil, Jeff Barry & Ellie Greenwich: Million Dollar Babies" in the continuing series on Rock 'n' Roll Jews. $9 includes a light breakfast. Miles Nadal JCC, Sunday, Feb. 22, 11 a.m. to 12: 30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0. E-mail music@mnjcc.org.

• Toronto Jewish Film Society presents I Love You, Alice B. Toklas! (1968) featuring **Peter Sellers** as an uptight Jewish attorney who sheds some of his inhibitions before his marriage. Co-written by **Paul Mazursky**, with featured speaker **Mark Clamen**. $15. Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC. Sunday, Feb. 22, 4 and 7:30 p.m.

Carey and Daniel Domb

• Cellist **Daniel Domb** and guitarist **Carey Domb** perform a program of light classical music at Congregation B'nai Torah, 465 Patricia Ave. $12, $15. March 7, 8 p.m. Refreshments following. Reservations, shul office 416-226-3700, Yvonne 416-663-5976.

* * *

At the Galleries

• The Royal Ontario Museum presents Brilliant Strokes: Chinese Paintings from the Mactaggart Art Collection. Shown for the first time in Ontario and rarely seen in North America, the exhibition comprises a selection of magnificent paintings spanning the 15th-century Ming dynasty to the 20th century. On display in the Herman Herzog Levy Gallery in the Philosophers' Walk Wing. Feb. 21 to Sept. 7.

• Samson and Delilah, an iconic painting by **Peter Paul Rubens**, is on view at the Art Gallery of Ontario, along with The Massacre of the Innocents, a Rubens work from the Thomson Collection. Both masterpieces had previously hung together for 200 years in the Prince of Liechtenstein's private collection before being separated in the 1880s. Samson and Delilah is on loan from the National Gallery in London and leaves Toronto in April.

* * *

Out of Town: Feb. 14 was not just Valentine's Day – it was also the 100th anniversary of the birth of celebrated journalist-writer-poet **A. M. Klein**, who was born in Ukraine and lived most of his life in Montreal. The University of Ottawa's Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Program presents a celebration of Klein's writings and legacy with readings from his work by Ottawa poets, hosted with commentary by **Seymour Mayne**. Arts Court Library, 2 Daly Ave., Ottawa. Tuesday, Feb. 24, 8 p.m. Free admission, refreshments.

• Israel's innovative Batsheva Dance Company is visiting Vancouver for the first time this week as part of the Cultural Olympiad 2009 festival. The company performs its acclaimed Deca Dance at the Vancouver Playhouse, Feb. 20 and 21. www.batsheva.co.il

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Movie pays tribute to Chess Records, black performers

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Think of American music and names like Chuck Berry, McKinley Morganfield, a.k.a. Muddy Waters, and Etta James come to mind.

Adrien Brody, left, plays Leonard Chess and Jeffrey Wright portrays Muddy Waters.

But what about Lejzor Czyz?

You'll be forgiven if his name does not strike a chord of recognition.

Czyz, a Polish Jew who immigrated to the United States in 1928 to join his family in Chicago, later changed his name to Leonard Chess.

As Leonard Chess, he and his brother, Philip, founded Aristocrat Records, which was subsequently known as Chess Records.

Their company nurtured African-American singers and promoted cutting-edge rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll recordings that influenced, among others, Elvis Presley, Eric Clapton, The Beatles, the Beach Boys and the Rolling Stones.

Darnel Martin's biopic of Leonard Chess, Cadillac Records, is scheduled to open in Toronto on Friday, Feb. 20, at the Bloor Cinema. It is presented by the Bloor Cinema and the Toronto Jewish Film Festival.

Set in the late 1940s and '50s, Cadillac Records stars Adrien Brody as Chess, Jeffrey Wright as Waters, Mos Def as Berry and Beyoncé Knowles as James.

The movie, nearly two hours in length, is essentially a tribute to these musical innovators rather than a portrait of Chess.

Chess is depicted as a savvy businessman who happened to be an astute connoisseur of black music. Oddly enough, Chess' brother is completely omitted from the script.

The film, which unfolds against the backdrop of a society still in the thrall of segregation, begins as Chess, then a struggling junkyard dealer, promises his girlfriend's gruff father that he will be a success one day.

The scene shifts to the Macomba Lounge, a nightclub run by the Chess brothers. The smoke-filled, disreputable club becomes a venue for new but talented entertainers.

Chess, who has an eye for up-and-coming talent, spots Waters, a hard-living womanizer from the cotton fields of Mississippi. As the Chess record label catches fire, he recruits still more clients.

Thanks to Waters and Berry, the Chess label moves beyond the strict confines of "race records" and crosses over into the profitable mainstream market.

Beyoncé Knowles plays Etta James.

As a token of appreciation for their efforts, Chess gives each of his stars a Cadillac car, the ultimate American status symbol.

Chess, himself an immigrant who makes good, drives a blue Caddy.

Cadillac Records is in top form when the legendary songs of love and loss and hope and despair fill the screen with their power and poignancy. Otherwise, it tends to be a rather pedestrian film.

Beyoncé, portraying the difficult, drug-addled daughter of a prostitute, is magnetic and electrifying. The songs she belts out leave a viewer in awe.

By comparison, Brody seems pale and ineffective. Wright and Def, however, deliver credible, even stirring performances.

In short, Cadillac Records pays homage not only to Chess but to the pantheon of black performers who revolutionized popular music in America.

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Chutzpah! Festival features performers from around the world

By LAUREN KRAMER
Special to The CJN

Israel's Batsheva Dance Company.

VANCOUVER — The city's Chutzpah! Festival, which includes music, theatre and dance and features artists from around the world, opens today and runs through March 1.

This year's lineup includes Israel's Batsheva Dance Company; Grammy Award-winners The Klezmatics, who are teaming up with African-American gospel singer Joshua Nelson; and a jazz-blues comedy cabaret by Rain Pryor, daughter of the late comedian Richard Pryor.

The opening night gala features comedians Ross Bennett, Brad Zimmerman, Tom Cotter and Cory Kahaney in Pastrami on Rye…With Mayo, while other highlights include a performance by the Andy Statman Trio, whose CD, East Flatbush Blues, was nominated for a 2008 Grammy Award.

Excitement for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games is mounting, and this year's Chutzpah! Festival coincides with performances that form part of the Vancouver Cultural Olympiad 2009, a few weeks of artistic celebration in the city.

The Olympiad has given financial and marketing support to Chutzpah! since 2008 and will continue to do so until 2010. "It's been a great partnership, and it's too bad it has to end next year," says Mary Louise Albert, the festival's managing director and the artistic managing director of the Norman Rothstein Theatre in Vancouver.

While most of the Chutzpah! performances will take place at the Norman Rothstein Theatre and the Wosk Cabaret at the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver, this year a few other venues have been added for Chutzpah! productions. Audiences will also be applauding in the auditoriums of the Chan Centre for Performing Arts at the University of British Columbia, the Vancouver Playhouse and the Firehall Arts Centre.

That means an even wider exposure to the greater community than usual, says Albert, who expects a festival turnout of approximately 8,000. "We always get a larger audience than just the Jewish community, but this year's festival will increase opportunities for the general and Jewish community to see professional art that has a link with a broad range of what it is to be Jewish."

The Chutzpah! Festival: The Lisa Nemetz International Showcase of Jewish Performing Arts was named for Lisa Nemetz, a dancer, lawyer and arts advocate. A Vancouverite, Nemetz died of breast cancer in 1997, while in her early 30s. Her husband, David Levi, is an ongoing supporter of the festival in honour of her memory.

The website address of the Chutzpah! Festival is www.chutzpahfestival.com.

Survivor's battle to retrieve her art

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

The story of how Maria Altmann, an elderly Holocaust survivor, took on the Austrian government to reclaim her family's looted Gustav Klimt paintings is a fascinating David and Goliath story.

Adele's Wish, a documentary that recounts Altmann's experience, gets its Toronto premiere at the Canadian Art Reel Artists Film Festival, running from Feb. 26 to March 1.

The film, directed by Terrence Turner, is as informative as it is thrilling. The story is told as a series of interviews with many people – lawyers, professors, historians and Altmann herself – seamlessly edited together as a continuing narrative.

Altmannn is the niece of Adele Bloch-Bauer, whose husband Fritz commissioned famed Austrian painter Gustav Klimt to paint two portraits of Adele in the early 20th century.

These paintings and three other Klimts were stolen from the Bloch-Bauer estate by the Nazis in 1938 after the annexation of Austria. After the war, the paintings were housed in the Austrian National Gallery.

After a 1998 repatriation law was passed in Austria, supposedly making it easier for Holocaust Survivor families to reclaim their looted possessions, Altmann, now in the United States, attempted to get back the Klimt paintings.

However, the Austrian government was reluctant to give up these priceless paintings, arguing that Adele, who died in 1937, had bequeathed them to the National Gallery in her will.

Altmann hired lawyers to pursue her case, and the Austrian government put up hurdles at every turn. What followed was a battle, not just legal but moral and ethical, that ended up involving the U.S. government and the Supreme Court.

Adele's Wish is a highly enjoyable and well put together documentary that tells this, at times complex, legal drama in a fast-paced and easily understandable fashion.

Adele's Wish screens March 1 at 2:30 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave.

The Canadian Art Reel Artists Film Festival is a project of the Canadian Art Foundation and is in its sixth year.

Other highlights include the world premiere of a film on David Lynch's exceptional art practice, the Canadian premiere of a film on the psychological portraits of Alice Neel, and the world premiere of Georg Baselitz: Making Art after Auschwitz and Dresden, an engrossing profile of the postwar German artist who, literally, turned the art world upside down.

For tickets and other information, go to www.canadianart.ca/reelartists or call 416-368-8854, ext. 102.

The first of two paintings of Adele painted by Klimt.

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Books & Authors

A masterpiece of scholarship on Jewish names

By BILL GLADSTONE
Special to The CJN

When the first edition of Alexander Beider's Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire came out in 1993, it was hailed in genealogical circles as one of the most important books ever printed about Jewish surnames. His subsequent compilations of Jewish surnames from Poland, Galicia and other regions have only solidified his reputation as a foremost authority in the field.

Alexander Beider

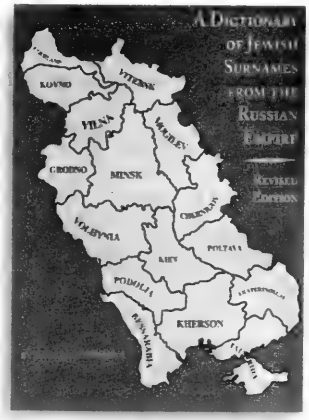
Beider recently updated the Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire, a Herculean task that took four years. The revised edition has just been published by Avotaynu, the New Jersey-based Jewish genealogical publishing house. At 1,000 pages in hardcover, it's nearly 50 per cent larger than its predecessor. The original work has about 50,000 surname entries, the new and improved version about 74,000.

Beider considered the revision necessary because of the explosion of new sources and knowledge that has occurred over the last 15 years due to the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the rise of the Internet, and the publication of numerous related new works. He expanded the work's geographical range, altered hundreds of entries and added many new cross-references.

The Moscow-born statistician, linguist and onomastician, who has lived in Paris since 1990, is credited with almost single-handedly revolutionizing the field of Jewish onomastics. Before Beider, most researchers rehashed names and ideas from the published literature with little scientific method and little regard to where the names occurred geographically. One of Beider's central methodological principles was to link surnames to the geographical regions in which they originated, and he was the first to do an inductive survey of surnames based on primary sources such as old voters' lists, censuses, civil records and other archival material.

Browsing through the dictionary reminds us how often our surnames contain capsulized references to our ancestral past. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when Russian Jews were obliged to adopt surnames, many took names of patronymic or matronymic origin – derived from a father's or mother's name – reflecting traditional Hebrew naming customs. Such names include Meyerovitz (son of Meyer), Davidovitz (son of David) and Gitlin (from the female name Gitl), thus preserving the name of an ancestor.

The plentiful class of surnames inspired by occupations offer glimpses of an outmoded village way of life. The name Bodgas (from German), for instance, means "bathhouse"; Cherednyak (Belarusian) is "cattle shepherd"; Drach (Yiddish) is "hand mill"; Fajnshrajber (Yiddish) is "calligrapher"; Gitelmakher (Yiddish) is "cap maker"; Goren (Ukrainian) is "forging furnace"; Katsov (Hebrew) is "butcher"; Latkemakher (Yiddish) is "maker of pancakes"; Milkhiker (German) is "dairyman"; Pakhter (Yiddish) is "leaseholder"; Plytnik (Belarusian) is "raft driver"; Shkolnik (Belarusian) is "beadle, sexton in a synagogue"; and Torgovets is "tradesman" (Russian).



Surnames derived from place-names are also common. The name Bobrushkin is linked to the town of Bobrujsk; Drubicher is linked to Drubich; Gordon to Grodno; Mogilevich to Mogilev; Polyakov to Polyak; Slobodkin to Slobodka; and Usyshkin to the Usyskin River. Many surnames are unique to a particular town or region but may be difficult or impossible to find on a map. (For assistance, see the book Where Once We Walked, the award-winning shtetl locator by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Sack.)

When surnames became mandatory, many Jews took names based on personal characteristics (such as Langbart, meaning "long beard") or pleasant associations (Feldblum, Goldberg, Rosenstein, Silverman). A small but well-documented subcategory of "ridiculous" surnames includes such monickers as Brodavka (wart) and Dolgoshiya (long-necked). One pictures disdainful bureaucrats holding their noses as they assign laughable and even disrespectful last names to the poor Jewish applicants summoned to appear before them.

Other surname categories include rabbinical names and names of Kohen or Levite origin. For example, Beider links the famous name of Chagall to Segal, a Kohenite acronym of Hebrew origin dating back to the 11th century.

The dictionary's 200-page introductory section illuminates the dark process of how Jews acquired their family names. These opening chapters discuss the history of Jewish names in Eastern Europe, their types and morphology and linguistic aspects, the patterns of their adoption, the overlap of Jewish and Gentile surnames, and the author's scientific approach. Although densely written and highly technical, this material may fascinate those seeking to understand how, when and why Jewish surnames derived in the former Pale of Settlement.

A statistician at heart, Beider throws in statistical charts whenever possible, such as his percentage tables of the most common Jewish surnames in the various Russian provinces. Based on 1912 data, the most common names in Vitebsk region were: Kagan, Levin, Gurevich, Ginzburg, Ioffe, Rabinovich, Sverdlov, Raport, Shapiro and Livshits. The list for Grodno shows Kaplan, Levin, Lev, Epshtejn, Kagan, Goldberg, Fridman, Shapiro, Rabinovich and Vajnshtejn.

Despite the high reliance on mathematics, the science of Jewish surnames can never be exact, since overlapping layers of meaning and language inevitably lead to ambiguities. Beider's forthright discussions of such ambiguous derivations are enlightening. One must applaud his unfailing fidelity to the facts and his refusal to alter them to fit theoretical constructs.

Those who wish merely to look up the etymology of a surname should turn directly to the dictionary of Surnames, which takes up the remaining 800 pages of the book. A smaller softcover volume accompanies the dictionary and provides an invaluable Soundex listing of all the surnames within, so the correct entry may be found no matter how the name is spelled.

Before consulting the dictionary, it's best to have some basic knowledge about the surname one is curious about. It's important to know, for example, that the name Chambers was once Cherkofsky, Pearson was once Persovsky, or Yarmouth was once Yarmolinsky. Many of our old-fashioned names did not survive the Holocaust or the process of immigration to the New World and the dual cultural influences of anglicization and Americanization.

Ardent genealogists may want a dictionary of their own for home use; others will be content to consult it in a synagogue or reference library. Beider's dictionaries for Poland, Galicia and other regions are also recommended.

For details about the Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire, visit www.avotaynu.com.

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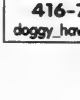

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Jewish sports leagues to begin in spring

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Alex Voihanski has run sports leagues before. He's organized some of the city's biggest baseball and basketball leagues – one with 90 teams – and earlier this winter, he recruited and coached a group of Jewish hockey players who won the gold medal in the Canadian Multicultural Hockey League championship.

Now he's set his sights on something just as challenging, but with a payoff that might even be bigger. Voihanski, through his company Chai Life Sports, is planning to open sports leagues aimed at Jewish youngsters living in the GTA.

The leagues, which will be geared initially for kids from five to 12, will kick off in May with T-ball, softball and soccer. That will be followed by summer leagues for kids attending sports camps, and come fall and winter, hockey will be added to the sporting menu.

Chai Life will sponsor a launch party on Sunday March 29, from 2 to 4 p.m. at Pavilion Arena. It will include a free skate, music by Magen Boys Entertainment and activities for kids.

Voihanski, who cut his teeth operating B'nai Brith Canada's softball, hockey and basketball leagues, sees sports as a means to an end.

It's not just a way to have fun and get exercise, but it can also address the problem of assimilation by providing a vehicle to bring young Jews together and strengthen their Jewish identities, he said.

"I'm a very passionate person, especially in terms of Judaism and Israel," he said. "I see assimilation, and we need programs to bring these kids together."

Sport is something most youngsters enjoy and seeing successful Jewish athletes instils pride in young kids. It can be the glue to bring youngsters closer to their Jewish roots, Voihanski said.

What's more, "you never know when you bring kids together – you can find a diamond in the rough or a future community leader."

With his partner, Jeremy Blustein, and supported by an advisory board of prominent community members, Voihanski is hoping to attract hundreds of kids to the league's inaugural season, which will not play on Shabbat.

Alex Voihanski

He hopes to field eight soccer teams serving roughly 100 children playing in two divisions. Like other neighbourhood leagues, the Jewish circuit will rely on parent volunteers to coach and run scrimmages. Players will be divided by age, with five and six-year-olds playing together and older kids in the other division.

"We're big in terms of development and teaching technique, with zero tolerance for hitting and verbal stuff," he said.

The softball league, geared for nine-to- 12-year-olds, also gets underway in May. The kids will play "modified softball," the most popular variant of the game in which pitchers throw underhand, but without the power-generating windmill motion. Ninety per cent of the 90-team B'nai Brith league he organizes plays that style of game, he said.

T-ball is aimed at the younger crowd, those five to eight years of age.

Voihanski expects to field four T-ball and four softball teams. Games will be played in North York and Thornhill.

Hockey, which begins in September, will be held at the Pavilion on Sundays. He expects to ice 10 to 12 teams for children aged five to 12.

Basketball will also be played at the Pavilion for kids five to 12.

Voihanski's goal is to expand the league as participants reach their teens.

The league is primarily recreational in nature. Players in every sport will get one game and one practice a week and fees are expected to be in the $150 to $200 range for T-ball, softball and soccer. The cost of ice rental will likely push hockey fees closer to $400, he said.

All the leagues are non-profit, Voihanski said. "I do this because it's a passion for both Jeremy and I. We're both proud Jews."

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A partnership with potential

By YONI GOLDSTEIN

The first column I wrote for this newspaper, dated Jan. 5, 2006, was about a new minyan that had just started up in Toronto. Kehillat Or Chadash was the city's first egalitarian halachic prayer group – meaning that women were invited (actually, encouraged) to participate and lead the minyan, albeit within restrictions based on a modern Orthodox understanding of halachah.

Or Chadash was successful, for a while. The shul was run by a group of university students, held most of its minyanim at the Wolfond Centre on the campus of the University of Toronto, and was mainly attended by university students. Ultimately, when the original organizers moved on, Kehillat Or Chadash died.

Three years later, a new egalitarian halachic minyan has emerged in Toronto. The Toronto Partnership Minyan (TPM) is run along the same lines as the earlier iteration – women can read from the Torah, receive certain aliyot and lead various parts of the prayer service. But there is one very significant difference: TPM is organized and run by a group whose average age, I would guess, hovers around 40. (Full disclosure: my father, who brings the median age up, is one of the founders of TPM.)

On a recent Shabbat morning, TPM held a minyan on the edge of Bathurst Manor, in the chapel of the Toronto Heschel School. About 50 people were there, and the mixture of "kinds" of attendees was remarkable. There were a few young couples (some even brought their infant children), people in their 30s and 40s, and some in their 50s and 60s. And while the majority of those present would have normally found themselves in an Orthodox shul on a Shabbat morning, others usually attend Conservative shuls – and some don't go to shul on a regular basis at all.

It may seem counter-intuitive, but TPM stands a better chance of flourishing than Or Chadash ever did, because its founders and leaders are older. One might have concluded otherwise a few years ago, when a bunch of university students seemed to be the only Jews in Toronto with the will to try something different. Perhaps the oldies were a little slower to get going, but now that TPM is up and running, the commitment to maintain and grow an egalitarian halachic minyan appears strong. These people are in it for the long haul.

The birth of TPM is a win-win for Toronto Jews. Whether or not you subscribe to the minyan's brand of Judaism (and regardless of whether you plan to attend one of its future Shabbat services), it's essential that there be comfortable places for Jews of all stripes to express their religiousness. True, there are so many interpretations of what it means to be Jewish out there already, but adding one more means that at least a few more people will have a shul that they can happily call home.

Of course, synagogues don't run by themselves. They need support, both of the monetary kind and the suggestion/constructive criticism kind. To that end, TPM is teaming up with Eran Marom, kosher Toronto's most innovative chef for a Pesach cooking demonstration and wine-pairing tutorial on March 19. Chef Marom has been winning fans, including me, ever since his restaurant, Marron Bistro Moderne, opened on Eglinton Avenue two years ago. Kosher eaters in this city have never had anything like Marron. It features inventive, exotic and hearty food, served in a quiet, intimate environment. I'd eat there every week if I could afford to.

I would urge everyone to learn more about the Toronto Partnership Minyan. This is a promising and dedicated group performing an invaluable service for Toronto's Jewish community. We should all do what we can to help TPM flourish.

BLUEBERRY POPPY SEED COFFEECAKE FOR PURIM

Batter:
- 2/3 c sugar
- 2 tsp lemon zest, grated
- 1-1/2 c flour
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 c sour cream
- 1/2 c butter
- 1 lg egg
- 2 tbsp poppy seeds
- 1/4 tsp salt

Filling:
- 1/3 c sugar
- 2 c fresh or frozen blueberries, washed and drained
- 1 tbsp flour
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg

Preheat oven at 350°F. Grease and flour a 9" springform pan. In a bowl beat sugar and butter until fluffy. Add lemon zest and egg; beat a couple minutes at medium speed. In another bowl mix flour, poppy seeds, baking soda, and salt. Add to butter mixture alternately with sour cream. Spread batter over pan, up 1" on the side.

In another bowl combine filling ingredients and spoon over batter. Bake for 45-50 min. Cool. Sprinkle icing sugar on top when cooled.

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REMEMBERING OUR YESTERDAYS

By BILL GLADSTONE

PURIM PLAY

These costumed young actors appeared in a Purim play at the old Holy Blossom Temple on Bond Street around 1920. Perhaps the play was about the Purim drama itself. Pictured, from left, are Arthur Cohen, Abe Cohen, Sam Nelson, Harry Hertzman, Louis Goodman, Norman Cowan (?), Sam Coffler and Lionel Cohen. Well-known Toronto photographer William James took the picture.

[City of Toronto Archives photo]

Rabbis, professors and Jews: laryngitis?

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

Our community is suffering from laryngitis. We have a giant frog in our collective throat and refuse to gargle with a solution that will clear our trachea, allowing our voices to be heard.

This condition is not terribly new nor is it just local. It has been widespread and highlighted throughout the generations by Jewish sages such as Maimonides, who counselled the Jewish world not to remain silent while under siege.

Today, a serious battle we are fighting from within is with fundamentalism, as haredi leaders set back progressive Orthodoxy and Jewish life, sensing it to be secular or goyish. Recently, the beit din of Israel decided an Orthodox conversion that happened three decades ago is null, as the person did not live a halachic life thereafter. This has terrifying ramifications, since it means thousands of conversions might be nullified, leaving many Jews and their children as non-Jews.

This shift is indeed a siege, however, an equal or perhaps greater one is the fact that few local rabbinical voices decried this damaging decree, as well as the continual rise of haredi influence on our community.

So where are they? What of our rabbis while fundamentalism creeps up on us? Why are they so hushed when imams, bishops and ministers attack Israel on its dealings in Gaza? We desperately need them to fight for us.

(In the case of the haredi challenge, the truth is that many of our local rabbis are quiet because they fear being ostracized by this group that is imposing their fundamentalist views on the rest of us. Those fears are justified. There are numerous examples of compassionate rabbis around the world challenging haredi leadership and subsequently fearing for their futures. Strangely, we are critical of other religious groups for stymieing the views of their moderate members, but we rarely take a moment to consider religious bullying within our own ranks. Those people we often perceive as being the guardians of Jewish practice and tradition are often the stumbling blocks of rational Jewish expression and modernity.)

And where are our Jewish professors on campus to help deal with people like Canadian Union of Public Employees president Sid Ryan, a man of inflammatory, anti-Israel rhetoric. What has clogged the voice boxes of our academics who work alongside some of their sinister colleagues who attack Israel whenever a bell rings signalling the end of a class? Your silence leaves our Jewish students with the sense they are the sole protectors of Israel and the Jewish people on campus.

The loudest quiet, however, emanates from regular folk like Moshe and Rachel Jewish community member. We are in the midst of a global crisis that weighs heavily on the Jewish people, and the vast majority of our members remain soundless.

Granted, there are few opportunities for individuals to get involved in the fight, but that aside, why do we rarely hear a voice from the street calling out to our leadership to include us in the process of fighting fundamentalism and combating anti-Semites and haters of Israel right here at home in Toronto? Few get involved, but most of us claim we just didn't hear the yelling.

I love the Jewish people and I love this community. I therefore feel compelled to be critical and question why we're being so damned muted, so comfortable, when trouble has come our way once again. Get up and fight rabbis, professors and Moshe and Rachel. Laryngitis has a cure. It is called Jewish strength and eternal vigilance..

Avrum@veahavta.org Sderot/Sudan?

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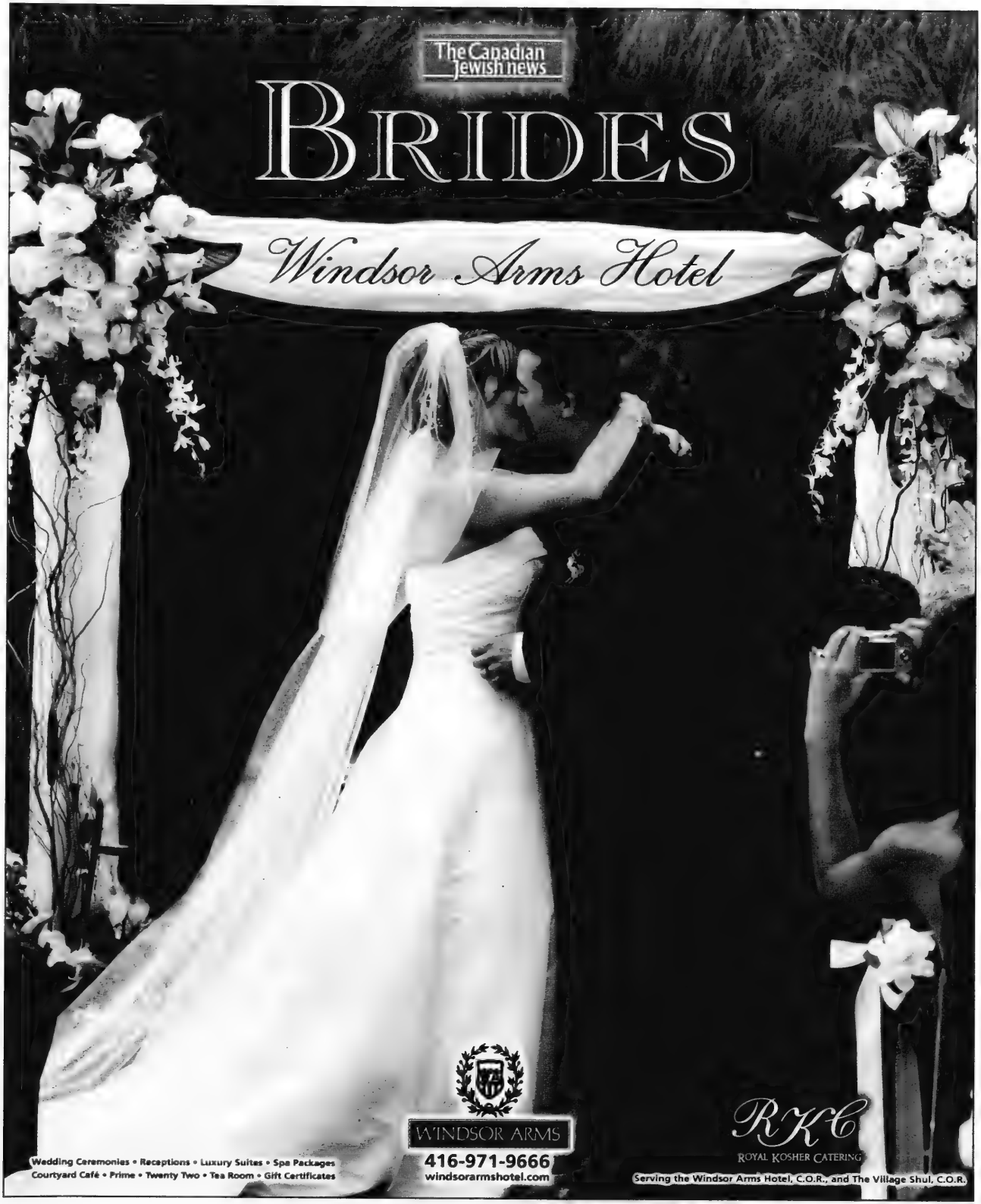
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A fantasy comes true

By KIM ADES and ALLAN FRIEDMAN
Special to The CJN

After a very rough week, I decided to try a little self-coaching to improve my frame of mind. Trade up. Think of a slightly better thought and then think of one that's better than that. Think about something that makes me feel good.

I began with a conversation with God.

"OK God. I am ready for you to bring me the man of my dreams. Tell him to just come and get me because I'm ready. Make him warm and kind and loving, and make him great with kids. Also God, make sure that we have similar values and that my family likes him. Please make him the kind of guy who knows, without a shadow of a doubt, that I am what he wants, and make him very comfortable expressing that thought regularly. I hope I am not being too demanding God, but please make sure he is attractive and not too short."

Then I launched into a full-blown fantasy.

The phone rings.

I answer, "Hello."

"Hi Kim. My name is Jake [I pulled a name out of thin air]. I got your number from such and such and they said I had to call you because you were my perfect match. They said that if I didn't call, I would be missing an opportunity of a lifetime to meet my soulmate."

The fantasy left such an impact on me that a few days later, I shared it with a friend. That very same evening, I received a message on my voice mail: "Hi Kim, my name is Allan Friedman. I got your name from a teacher at my school and they are under the impression that we should meet."

Holy smokes! My fantasy had come to life! I called him right back and immediately told him the story of my fantasy. He must have thought I was crazy, but I couldn't stop myself. He asked me to join him for dinner on Saturday night. Unfortunately, I was leaving on a business trip, returning Saturday around 5:30 p.m. Calculating the time it would take to arrive, get through customs, grab my luggage, get home and freshen up, I suggested a late dinner at 8 p.m.

He asked how I was planning on getting home. I said that I would grab a cab.

He said, "How about if I pick you up?"

An airport pickup on the first date! This was getting better by the minute!

"Sure," I said, "I would love that. How will I know it's you?"

"I have some pictures on Facebook that you can take a look at."

On the flight home, I wrote in my journal: "I am meeting Allan Friedman today, and for some reason, I am not nervous. It feels normal. After seeing his pictures, I feel like I have met him before. I am not sure where, maybe in another life."

Oddly enough, because I travel so much, I have also had a recurring fantasy about landing at the airport and having someone waiting for me with a sign.

I landed. I took a deep breath. As I walked through the glass doors to the arrival area, there he was waiting for me with a handmade sign that said, "KIM".

He did feel familiar, as though I had known him forever. He was definitely attractive but short (you always get what you focus on).

Within a week, he told me he loved me and started dropping marriage hints. He had to be nuts. But now, after six months, I am engaged and planning a wedding.

Funny things happen when you trade up your thoughts.

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Fun is a perfectly good 'f' word

By DOROTHY LIPOVENKO
Special to The CJN

It was 1 a.m. when the last guest pulled away from the shul parking lot; the bride and groom, walking through the dark and empty social hall, realized they had nothing to lose. So, shameless with hunger and convulsed with laughter, they snuck into the shul's kitchen looking for something to eat.

Bowing to custom, the newlyweds had fasted all day but were too busy dancing and circulating among guests to do more than snack at the festive meal. Almost 33 years later, my husband and I remember the delicious plate of leftovers caterer Rose Lazar fixed for us, which we happily demolished before heading out into the soft August night. But not before that wonderful lady also boxed us up some sweet table goodies.

A long time has passed since that memorable late night snack, which can trace its lineage to an earlier August day when a CJN summer student (me) was assigned to the same story as another young reporter for a Toronto daily (Henry Mietkiewicz). The rest is history.

While that post-wedding nosh is still fondly recalled, unknown to us then, it helped set the tone and shape the character of our relationship, namely, that while marriage is serious and sacred business, it should also be fun.

CJN staff table included (L to R) Ralph Hyman, Edith Hyman, Lewis Levendel and Lily Levendel.

Fun is a perfectly good "f" word, albeit ignored, neglected or simply dismissed in the lexicon of marriage. Like most young couples, we'd attended marriage preparation classes (honestly, learning how to stuff a turkey would have been more useful) but I cannot recall fun ever being mentioned.

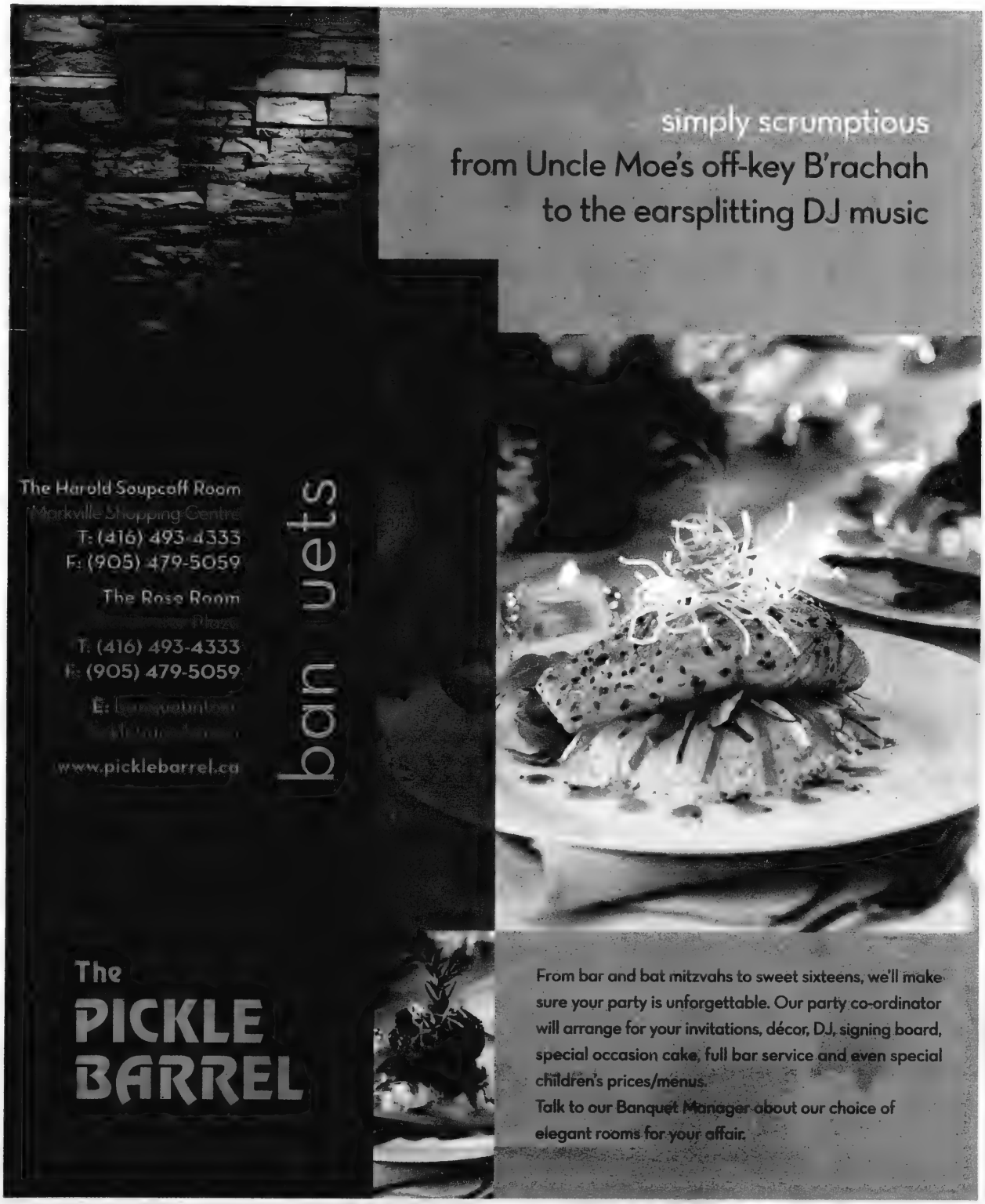
Too bad, because fun is like a generous pinch of spice or a squeeze of citrus on your favourite dish: the flavours brighten, instantly.

Fun is what you make it: even an e-mail to your spouse at work just to say hi. Fun, when you think about it, really means one doing for the other. And fun can spring from the unlikeliest sources.

Case in point: our first home was an apartment requiring use of a laundromat; on one such trip, an elderly Jewish woman spied a bouquet of flowers next to the clothes my husband was folding. "Oy, if mine hosband vood buy me flowers, I'd be dead!" she lamented. To this day, pretty posies in my husband's hands cracks us up.

I find myself often reaching for such memories of fun in times of stress, notably to cut off the supply of angry oxygen that feeds a marital spat. And while I may take flak for this, I'll brave it: keep it private. Work out problems or grievances between you, not on the phone with friends. The aim is not to burn up the phone lines to make yourself feel better (or worse, find a fellow commiserator) but to resolve your differences, together.

So, brides and grooms, mazel tov and "biz hundert-unzwanzig." Have a blast at your simchah, and remember, ask the caterer to pack you up a box of treats. A little something for the way.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A bride's guide to surviving your wedding day

By JENNIFER BRINDER
Special to The CJN

Every girl wants her happily ever after. As a child, I dreamed about my wedding day – the perfect ring, the perfect dress, and of course, the perfect man. Lucky for me, I got it all. I waited 23 years to have this perfect day and now I want to tell the brides out there how they can make their day a dream come true.

I was not nervous before the wedding. Everyone told me I wouldn't sleep the night before because of nerves. But I slept like a baby. My suggestion for the night before the wedding is to go out with your sister or best friend. See a movie, go for dinner, or even just hang out. This will get your mind off the next day. However, I wouldn't make it a late night. No one likes a drowsy bride – especially the groom.

I remember waking up the morning of my wedding thinking, "Wow, I can't believe the day is finally here!"

Then my hunger spoke, so my sister and I went for breakfast. This is my next and most important piece of advice – have a good breakfast! I would not have anything too heavy, but a bowl of cereal with some fruit or eggs with toast will give your wedding day the perfect start, and will give you the strength you need. I truly believe the longest day of a girl's life is her wedding day, and fainting at any point is not an option.

When I arrived at the hairdresser, I sat back and relaxed, and next thing I knew, I was off to the Beth Emeth Synagogue. I was excited to put on my wedding dress – this time I wasn't trying it on or doing a fitting. This was it! Once I took off that dress, I would be a married woman. When the zipper went up, I looked in the mirror, and I can say that I felt like the princess I always dreamed I would be on my wedding day.

When I was ready, the photographer told me to start walking toward my soon-to-be husband, whose back was to me, and then told David to turn around. I will always treasure the look he had on his face. He didn't have to say a word. That look told me I was the most beautiful girl that day. Treasure that specific moment. The look on your groom's face when he sees you for the first time in your dress is something to always remember.

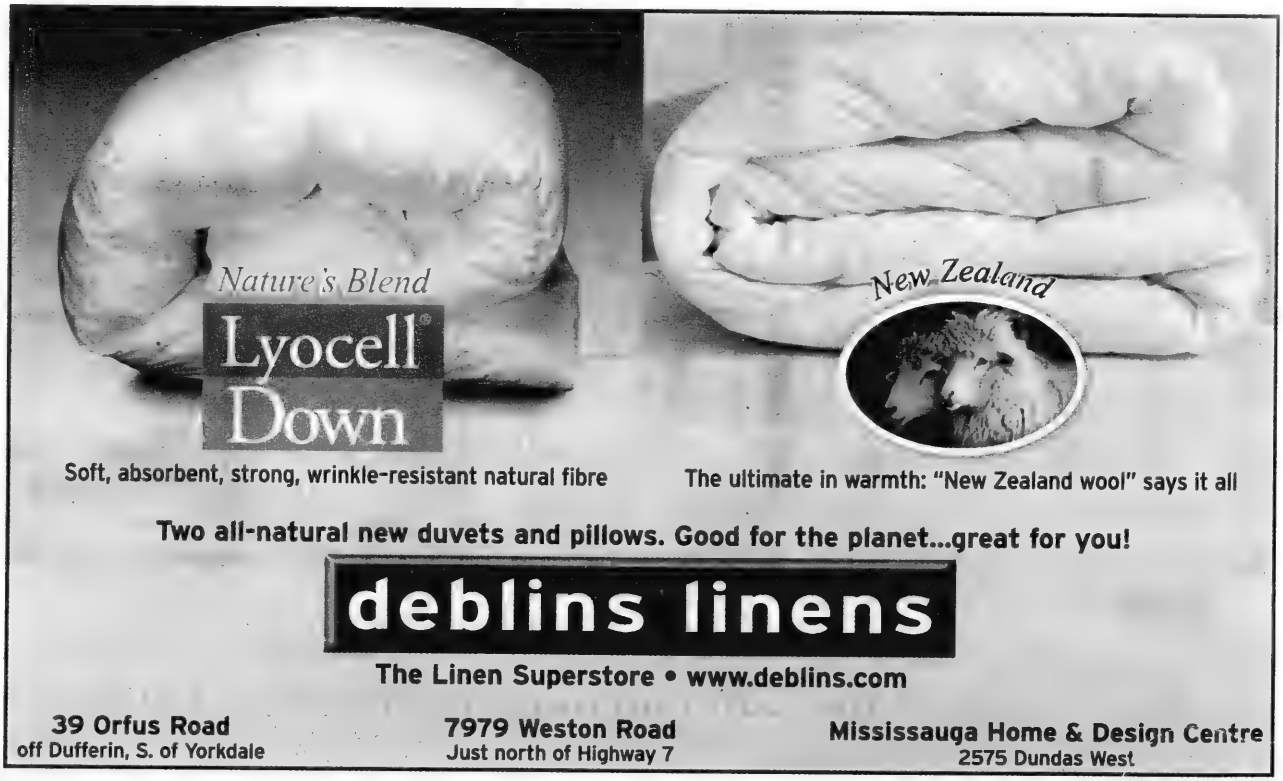
By the time the ceremony was ready to start, I was shaking. This was it. It was what I had been waiting for. My cue came for me to start walking down the aisle. The second I stepped foot in the sanctuary I started crying. Walking down the aisle, I saw my friends and my family there to celebrate the happiest day of my life.

When my husband stepped on the glass and everyone yelled, "Mazel tov," it was official! That evening, we danced and celebrated with our friends and family. At the end of the night, we couldn't believe it was all over. Everyone told me the day would go by so fast, and I tried my best to soak in every second.

Jennifer and David

I remember that day vividly, and I try to cherish those memories because I remember being so happy. Some of the guests told me that I was the happiest bride they ever saw, and I can definitely say I was.

The most important piece of advice I can give you is to cherish every single moment of that day. It was the most perfect day for me, and I married the most perfect man. Now I can say I am living my happily ever after, and I hope you do too.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Saying yes to the dress

By SHELLY GROISMAN
Special to The CJN

Today, it seems as though the pressure to find the perfect wedding dress is greater than the pressure to find the perfect man to marry, and in my case this was true.

I knew I wanted to marry my fiancé, Phil, a few months into our relationship. He possessed all the qualities I ever wanted in a partner, and lucky for me, at the age of 21, I had found him.

Phil proposed 2-1/2 years later, and it was one of the most exciting and memorable nights of my life. I woke up the next morning in a state of bliss when it suddenly hit me – last night, I had made the ultimate commitment to the perfect man.

Next, I thought, will be the perfect wedding dress!

Some women may think it's no big deal, but in my experience, no matter how many fantasies you have as a child, pictures you glance through in magazines, or episodes you watch of the TV series Say Yes to The Dress, once it becomes your reality, that's a whole other ball game.

My uneasiness stemmed from a few factors: the typical girly fear that nothing would look good on me; the reality of how many eyes would be gazing at me walking down the aisle; the gut-wrenching price points of these dresses; and last, that my desire for simplicity in a dress meant it would not be considered special enough for this important day.

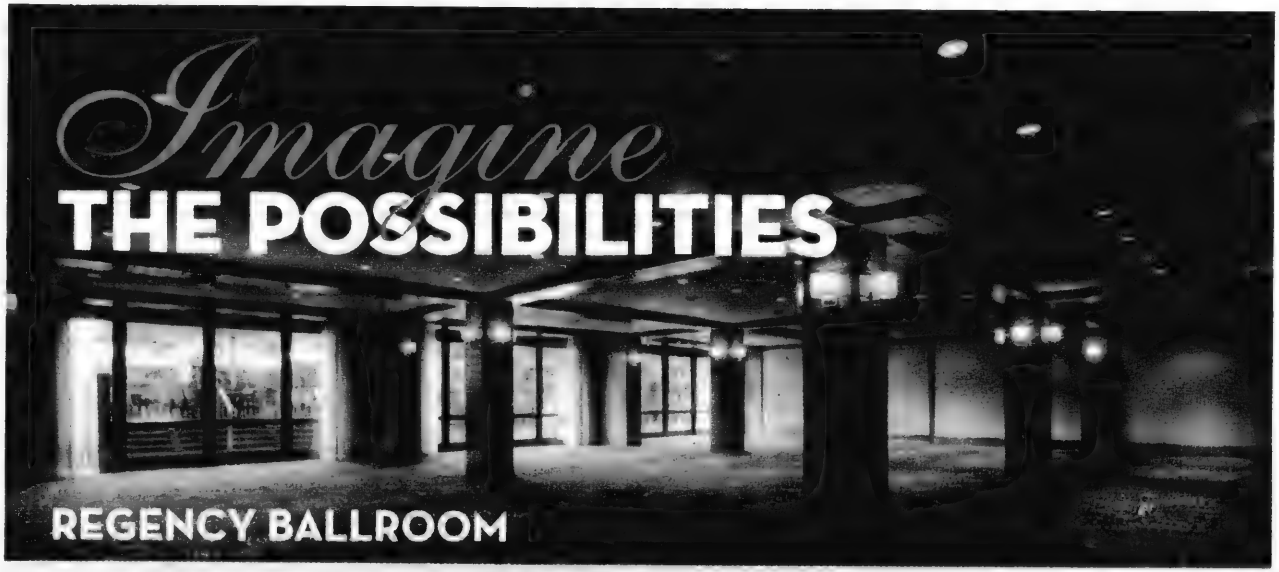
Shelly and Phil

Then, a close friend of mine who recently got married sat me down and put things into perspective. She reassured me about how many options I would have, how to work within my budget, and most importantly, that it takes about eight to 12 months to have the dress delivered from the date purchased. Being only eight months away from the wedding, I now realized I'd better get on it!

My friend recommended the store Mona Richie, and from the moment I walked in there, the owner, Mona, put my fears at ease. She assured me the process would be seamless and continually repeated, "Don't worry sweetheart, Mona always takes care of you."

And that she did, because after I finished zipping up the second dress she had picked out for me, I instantly knew it was the one. Maybe it was the tears welling up in my mother's eyes, Mona gasping in excitement, or all the other brides in the store giving me their two thumbs up, but I didn't want to look any further – I had found the one.

I think back now to all the countless hours I spent stressing over the idea of trying to find my perfect dress, all those months I contemplated A-line, ball gown, strapless or scoop neck. All of these details that were once a heavy burden now seem so trivial – because when push comes to shove, all the beautiful and most expensive dresses in the world can't beat the fact that on Aug. 9, I will be marrying the love of my life.



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"THEMES" in Event Planning : Downsizing, Restructuring, and Scaling back Event Planners – A Necessity not a Luxury

Downsizing, restructuring, and scaling back are the recurring "themes" in event planning during this volatile period. Yet, we still want to celebrate life cycle occasions and discover the silver lining in every cloud.

"In discussions with our clients we know everyone is conscious about not going over the top in planning social and corporate events. They don't want to appear too flashy, yet they still want to host events which are elegant, creative and have elements of fun", comments Karen Jacobs of UP & COMING EVENTS.

"As event planners we are able to share ideas and resources to create unique events that have all the elements of a good party, without blowing the budget" adds partner Karen Garscadden.

People often think that having an Event Planner is extravagant and indulgent. "I can do it myself", many say. However, doing it your self can create expensive mistakes and without access to the resources of an experienced planner, one may not always negotiate the best deal.

Garscadden claims "as repeat customers to our vendors, when we need to be budget conscious our suppliers are often approachable and respect restraints. We know how to save you money and get the best bang for your buck."

Whether it's a champagne & caviar extravaganza or a beer and pretzel party, event planners have creative ideas, resources and tricks of the trade to make your party memorable.

In a recent consultation with a bride & groom who were planning their wedding, their professional planner guided them through a series of scenarios that reduced costs over 20%, without sacrificing the overall look and feel of their special day.

It is times such as these, that we need to celebrate more than ever, to lift our spirits and escape (if even for a few hours). So let the party begin!

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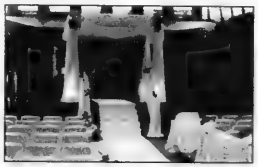

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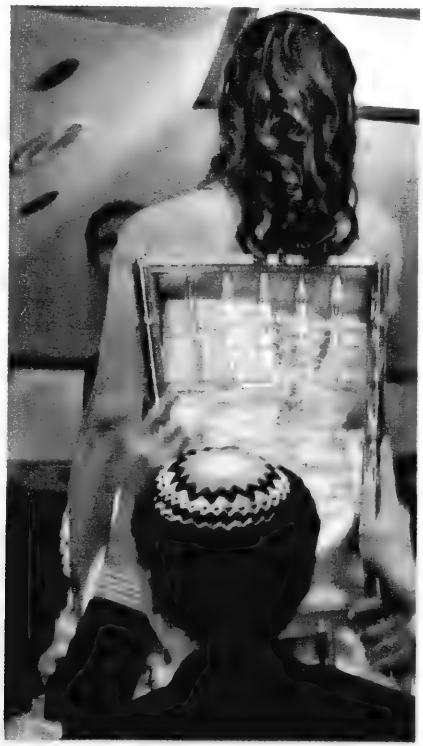
Wedding a reflection of the couple's interests



By VIVIAN RINGWALD-LEVINE
Special to The CJN

Dan and Terri got married on a beautiful fall afternoon day in September at Temple Emmanu-el in Toronto. As a planner, I always encourage couples to reveal to their guests their love for each other and their life passions. This creates a more intimate and personalized feel.

In the case of Daniel and Terri, the guests walked away with this kind of a feeling and more!

Guests were welcomed into the synagogue with Terri's passion – rhythmic percussion sounds of drumming. Daniel, an eco-farmer, harvested sunflowers, squash and other colourful veggies whose beautiful hues enhanced the ceremony and the reception.

During the reception, family and friends moved and grooved to drumming circles, while shaking the engraved maracas they had received as wedding favours.

After a scrumptious vegetarian meal of butternut squash soup served in squash bowls and vegetarian beet wellington, brown recycled bags were distributed so that everyone could take home the veggie centerpieces.

In keeping with the couple's green values, they arranged for food that was not eaten to be composted.

Guests were having so much fun that they partied into the wee hours of the morning. When the band finally retired, guests stayed to chat and rejoice – they simply were not ready to leave the warm welcoming environment that had been created!

Please see more photos on page B10

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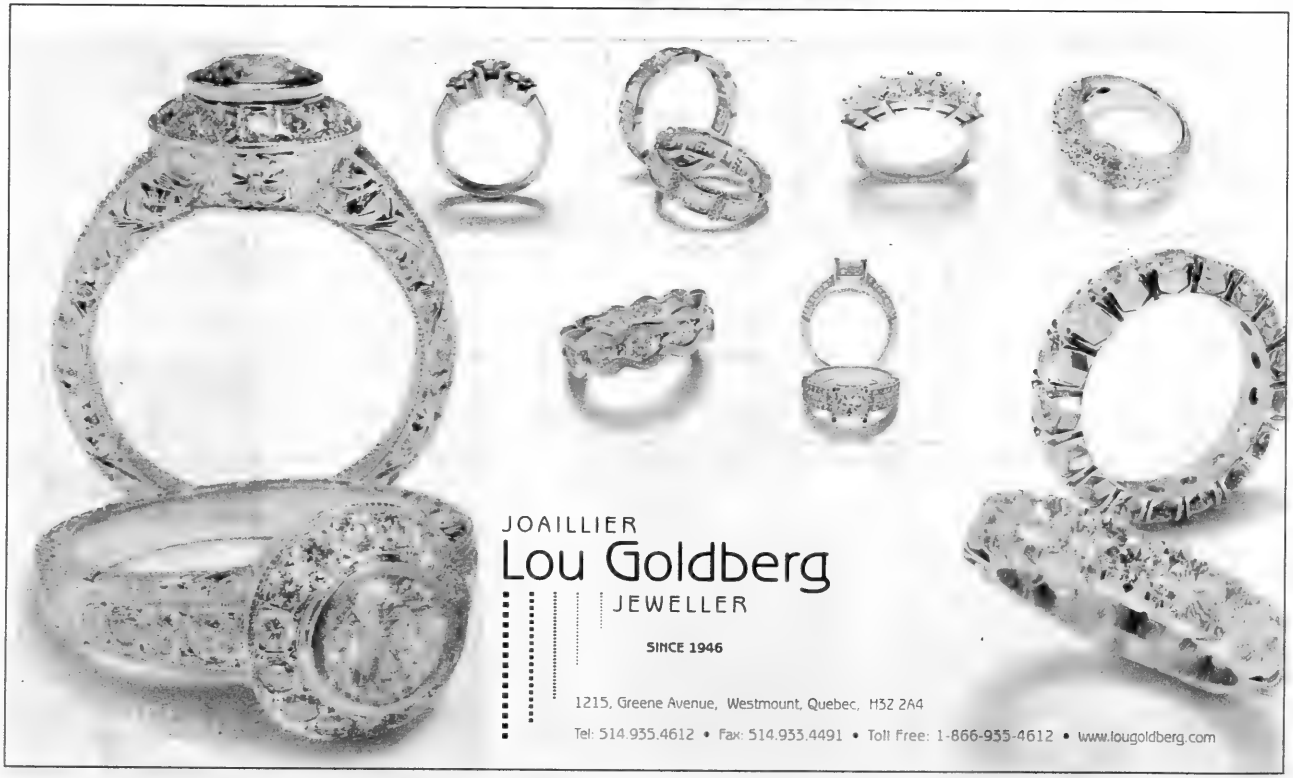
Under the chupah with family and friends

Dan and Terri's harvest wedding included a vegetarian meal and a drumming circle.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A night for more than yuks

By NETALY STETTER
Special to The CJN

Oct. 17, 2008 was the night David blew me away!

We had been planning to go to Yuk Yuk's for some time, but we'd never gotten around to it. Finally, he suggested that we should book a date to go with another couple (our close friends). I had also invited my best friend to join us, and David then invited his other close friend, too.

David and Netaly

I was becoming suspicious throughout the week that something might be happening that evening, but David told my best friend to keep throwing me off the scent, and she did – quite well!

The evening arrived, and he came home from work with two dozen red roses, so I started to become very suspicious. I called my girlfriend, and she told me that David is not a public person and not to anticipate too much, so as not to be disappointed. Of course, she knew all along what was coming.

David said that we should take the subway to go eat downtown. Since we live right on the subway line, I agreed.

As we got downtown, I began to complain about how cold it was and how we should have taken the car.

He said, "Yeah, I know, I'm so unromantic."

We got to the restaurant to eat dinner. Throughout the meal, I wasn't sure if he was going to propose during dessert, so I kept asking him if he wanted some dessert, and when he said that he didn't, I was taken aback.

"Are you sure, because we can share something?" I asked, wondering if I should order dessert, just in case.

Well, dinner ended and he asked for the cheque.

David proposes

My best friend called me and asked if there was any news to report, and I said, "No." She said not to worry, that it would happen another night.

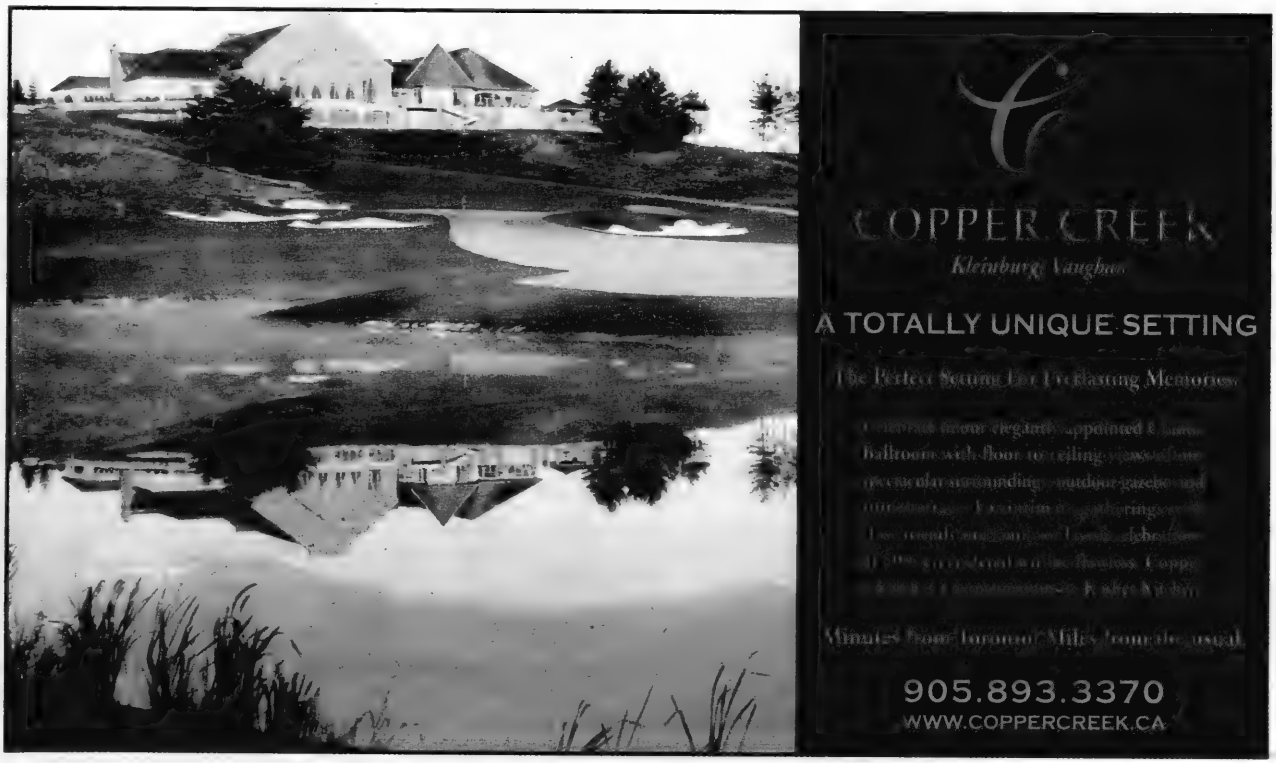
Next, we went to Yuk Yuk's, where David had reserved the front table for us. I had two very dear friends of mine there and he had two very close friends of his there. When the MC came on stage, he asked if anyone had any events or birthdays to announce.

That's when the spotlight turned on Dave (this all having been preplanned), and he got up to tell me how much he loved me, and then he knelt down on one knee to propose.

I, of course, began to cry, and our close friends (who all knew this was going to happen) were ready with their cameras. Of course, I could barely listen to the comedians after that!

At the end of the night, I was ready to subway back home, only to have Dave walk up to a black limo parked outside the comedy club and tell me that this would be our ride home instead.

I was shocked and breathless about the whole evening, and about how lucky I am to be marrying this amazing man.



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Brides

David proposed to Michelle in Barbados

By MICHELLE WINTER FLEISHMAN
Special to The CJN

Michelle and David

David and Michelle were eating a late dinner at a restaurant in Barbados. The weather was warm and breezy, and it was about 10 p.m.

They had been there for two days, and that night was special. They had been dating for just five months.

While they were eating dinner, David, thinking out loud, said, "Wouldn't this be a great place to get engaged?"

Michelle said, "Yes, it sure would."

Now, David and Michelle had big smiles on their faces.

"David, I don't have an engagement ring, but I have your ring that you gave me for a promise."

Without hesitation, David got down on one knee and asked, "Michelle, will you marry me?"

"Yes, of course I will," she replied, and all the servers clapped.

David and Michelle had a traditional Jewish wedding. They were married in a synagogue under a chupah, and their ceremony included an aufruf and bedecken.

They had a ball planning their wedding, and especially enjoyed having their nieces and nephews in the bridal party.

David chose his own tuxedo, and Michelle selected the colours of peach, pink and lavender for the umbrella dance.

On the day of the wedding, David surprised Michelle with a pink and purple wedding balloon – this was the icing on the cake.

Their horah dance lasted for almost 10 minutes and was the most joyous thing one could see. They say they'll never forget it. People were in awe!

It was the best wedding ever. The date was May 16, 2004. The couple didn't waste a minute and left the next morning for Prince Edward Island.

Prince Edward Island is full of different attractions. They slept in a lighthouse. It was very quaint, small and special. They tried on Anne of Green Gables wigs. David, in red braids, was a hoot!

David and Michelle, now married almost 4-1/2 years, couldn't be any happier.

They love each other every day more than the one before. L'chaim.

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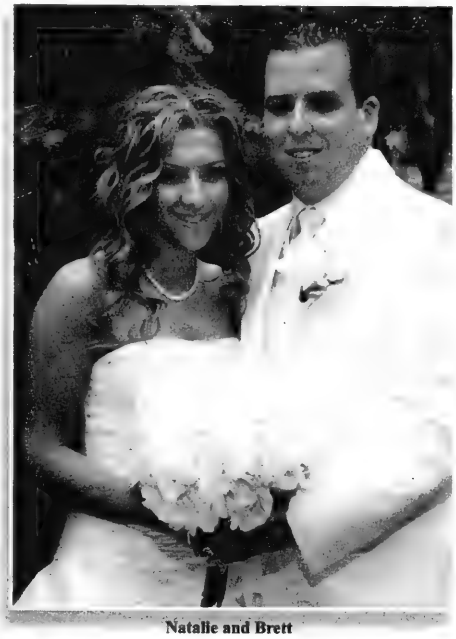
Brides

My big, kosher, traditional Jewish wedding

By NATALIE DAVIDSON
Special to The CJN



Natalie and Brett

Every girl has her own idea of a perfect wedding planned out in her mind – the wedding she has been dreaming of since she was small.

In my dream wedding, I was wearing white shorts, a white T-shirt and a veil. Brett would wear white shorts, a white T-shirt and a white tie. It would, of course, take place in Las Vegas, and "Elvis" would marry us.

Before I finished telling my mom our wedding plans, I could already see the disappointment on her face. My mom wasn't understanding our grand Las Vegas plan, she was more interested in our being married in a synagogue by a rabbi.

I tried to explain that I would find a Jewish Elvis, and before I could finish she picked up the phone. She turned around and asked, "How's June 15?"

It was perfect.

Wow, that was easy. I thought she called the travel agent to book the flight – WRONG! Turns out she was on the phone with the Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, the same shul she and my dad got married in.

Before I knew it, we had started planning my big, kosher, traditional Jewish wedding – with a few of my own modern twists.

We had a year and a half before the big day, and my mom and I had already kicked into high planning mode. Dad was getting into it too, and Brett was just happy to stay out of it.

There was still so much to plan – photographer, videographer, invitations, florist, band, and of course, I still had to find my wedding dress!

One day, my Dad came walking into the kitchen with a big white box in his hands. He placed the box in front of me on the table and began explaining the importance of the contents. Apparently, when my mom found her dream wedding dress it was too expensive. Determined to get the dress of her dreams, she tried to beg my grandmother to buy it, and they came up with the perfect solution. They made a deal that my mom's daughter would wear the dress on her wedding day, too, so that it would get a double use.

I guess they never thought that 27 years later, some poor girl would have to wear this old, out-of-style wedding dress. There was no way I was going to wear that dress! I caved on Vegas, but this is where I draw the line!

After many arguments, I got my own dream wedding dress (my daughter may have to wear it on her big day). I also got my dream shoes – crystal-studded Puma runners!

After the many months of planning for my big, kosher, traditional Jewish wedding, it had finally arrived. My mom's big vision was the most picture-perfect wedding any bride could ask for. It could not even compare to my original Vegas dream!

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Brides

Getting engaged can be a laughing matter

By ELLEN LECHTER GREEN
Special to The CJN

In the movies when couples get engaged the emphasis is often on romance. But is that the case in real life? According to a few Canadian couples, romance can and does happen, along with some unintentional humour and a few blunders thrown in as well.

Maria and Steve Copnick have been married for 38 years. "We've learned to let go of petty annoyances like Steve's snoring and my compulsive bossiness," says Maria. "But it also helps to laugh. Even our engagement turned out to be inadvertently funny."

The couple had been dating for three years. "We talked about getting married, but I wanted to be surprised," says Maria. "I was determined to get engaged on my 21st birthday, so I started dropping hints."

Steve took her out to dinner for her birthday and then later handed her a brightly wrapped package. "You can imagine my disappointment when I discovered a scarf," she says.

Maria remembers barely thanking Steve through her tears and saying a quick good-night. The next morning at 5 a.m., she awoke to a scratching sound at her window. She looked out, and there was Steve, standing there with a long stick. Even stranger was what he was wearing.

"He always loved everything medieval, and he was dressed up in armour like some kind of a knight. When I opened the window, he got down on one knee and he was really nervous because he said, 'May I have your foot in marriage,'" she says. "At first he didn't realize what he said but the whole situation was just so crazy that I burst out laughing. And then he did, too. Of course, that was only after I said yes."

Rob MacNeil also got down on one knee to propose to future wife Suzanne, and although it was unexpected, it couldn't beat Suzanne's initial surprise of meeting Rob in the first place. "I met Rob one day while I was hobbling down the street with my dog, and he was looking for an apartment in the building where I lived," she says. "It wasn't a great time for me. I had just broken my leg and was wearing an eye patch following eye surgery. Next thing I knew he was my neighbour."

Suzanne first made it clear she was not interested in getting involved at that time, but Rob – and her dog Sparky – had different ideas. "Rob was fine with my no-dating policy, but behind my back he was becoming best friends with my dog," Suzanne says. "Sparky would walk down the hall of our building and scratch on Rob's door to say hello. Before I knew it, Rob had become a part of our lives."

Continued on page B16

Cooking shower for brides

Tammy Mahl's pre-wedding festivities before her January wedding to Corey Gold included a cooking shower with chef Caroline Davis. A sample of items prepared and eaten at the shower include:

Tammy Mahl takes part in hands-on shower

SPINACH SALAD WITH CARAMELIZED ONIONS, PEARS AND CHEVRE

1 box of pre-washed baby spinach (roughly 4 cups)
1 Vidalia onion, sliced in rings
4 Forelle or Bosc pears, sliced into 1/4 in. slices
1 pck. of chevre
3 tbsp. butter
balsamic vinegar for drizzling.

In a large frying pan, melt butter and fry onions until a dark colour, and let cool slightly. Place spinach on a large platter. Pour caramelized onions on top of spinach. Place sliced pears on top of spinach and onion. Sprinkle chevre over salad, and drizzle with balsamic.

Continued on page B18

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Brides

Marcy and Mitch Massicotte, who have been married for 15 years, are seen here with their two children, Tara and Jarred.

Proposals come in all shapes and sizes

Continued from page B15

Although the couple had only been dating for a few months, Suzanne was thrilled by Rob's proposal, after dinner at a restaurant where they had had their first date. "It felt like we had known each other forever," she says.

Nine years later, they share their Toronto home with two dogs.

Marcy Fruchter was expecting a proposal during a trip to Mexico with boyfriend Mitch Massicotte. "It was the night of our three-year anniversary," remembers Marcy. "We had this great dinner and a walk on the beach and then we exchanged gifts. I gave him his gift and then he gives me a really nice leather purse. So I am looking through every pocket looking for the ring but to no avail."

Marcy tried to hide her disappointment for the remainder of the trip, but later discovered she wasn't the only one expecting a proposal. "After I got home, I started listening to my phone messages and basically every one of my friends called and left messages asking if we were engaged!"

About seven months later, Mitch finally proposed. "We had just gone out for dinner, and he asked me if I wanted to go for a walk through this nice park. We stopped at a bench, and he pulled out a stunning ring. Needless to say, I was not expecting it that night!"

They have now been married for 15 years and live in Toronto with their two children, Tara, 14, and Jarred, 11. "Over the years, what works for us is that we both respect one another," says Marcy. "We love to spend time together as a family but also still as a couple."

Brides

Kamishbrot, mandelbrot, biscotti – delicious by any name

By RIVKA TAL
Special to The CJN

I've heard it said that there are really a very limited number of recipes in the world – that is, the basic ones from which all others evolved. For instance: who was the first person in the world to have the idea of wrapping little pastries around a savoury filling? He or she could possibly claim the patent for won tons, kreplach, empanadas and pierogi.

But I wonder if the same can be said about mandelbread (or mandelbrot) and kamish bread (kamishbrot). Biscotti, too! Let me explain.

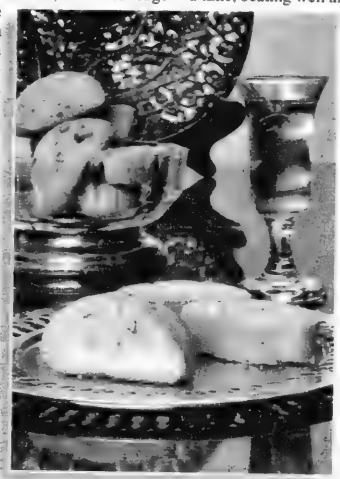
Mandelbread refers to chewy, twice-baked sliced cookies made with oil, an old-fashioned type of treat. Mandel means almond in German and in Yiddish, and these cookies were traditionally made with crushed almonds. Great for dipping into a steaming cup of tea, they kept for ages in a sealed container (if well-hidden).

But here's a culinary curiosity: my mother, of blessed memory, and many other ladies in Minnesota where I grew up called these treats "kamish bread." Every other recipe I ever met in either North America or Israel referred to something called "mandelbread," and it looked suspiciously the same. How did this dichotomy of names evolve?

I have heard from two different reliable sources that those of the "kamish" persuasion are of Ukrainian origin, while those preferring "mandel" hail from Russia and all the way west to Germany and Austria.

Well, my mother-in-law, a charming Viennese lady, does call the piles and piles of such cookies she used to make "mandelbrot." But the above theory just doesn't hold water (or oil), because my mother's forebears were from Russia! Further, I don't believe that a majority of the Jews in Minnesota are of Ukrainian origin. Perhaps it's somehow connected to the fact that the the classic Minnesota recipe we grew up with – called "kamish bread-Ione" – came from Ione Siegel of the Minnesota Iron Range.

Then there are biscotti, the latest rage at upscale coffee shops. These kamish bread-cousin Italian cookies are traditionally baked with anise, but have since incorporated all kinds of substitutes: hazelnuts, filberts, dried cranberries, chocolate chips and almonds (not all at once). The name biscotti comes from "bis," meaning "twice," and "cotto," meaning baked, since the cookies are baked twice. They tend to be much harder and almost always necessitate a dip in wine or coffee or tea. Biscotti can be found in all sorts of flavours, but the most common contain anise.



KAMISH BREAD

4 oz. almonds, slivers or coarsely chopped
1 cup sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
4 eggs
1 tsp.vanilla extract
3 cups flour
3 tsp. baking powder

Chop almonds finely. Set aside. Cream sugar and oil thoroughly. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add vanilla. Sift flour with the baking powder and mix in. Stir in the chopped almonds. (This can be done either by mixer or by hand.)

Gather the dough up into a ball and place in a bowl. Cover and chill overnight or at least for a few hours in the refrigerator.

Preheat oven to 350. With floured hands, divide dough into 2 pieces. Form each piece into a roll as long as your cookie sheet. Place rolls on a parchment paper-lined cookie sheet. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until slightly firm to the touch.

Remove from oven and lower heat to 250. With a serrated knife, slice the rolls diagonally into 3/4-inch slices and place cut side-down on the cookie sheet. Toast for about 25 minutes until lightly brown. (Be sure to watch them!) Remove to wire racks to cool. Yields about 60 pieces.

CHOCOLATE CHIP POPPY SEED KAMISH BREAD

3/4 cup sugar
3/4 cup oil
3 eggs
2 1/2 cups flour
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 cup poppy seeds
1/2 cup chocolate chips (minis are best)

Cream sugar and oil. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Sift flour with baking powder and salt; mix in. Stir in poppy seeds and chocolate chips. Follow above directions for forming and baking rolls.

Let's salute the Italian connection with a very simple Anise Biscotti recipe. Anise seed has a distinct, sweet, licorice-like taste.

ANISE BISCOTTI

1 cup sugar
1/2 cup vegetable oil
4 eggs
2 cups flour
2 tsp. baking powder
2 tsp. anise seed
1 tsp. vanilla

Cream sugar and oil. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Sift flour with baking powder; mix in. Stir in anise seeds. Follow above directions for forming and baking rolls.

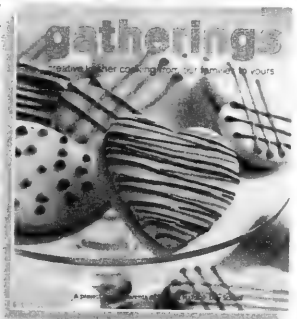
Bestselling cookbook makes an ideal gift

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

The bestselling cookbook, Gatherings: creative kosher cooking from our families to yours, has been a highly successful fundraising project since October 2003 for Netivot HaTorah Day School, a modern Orthodox Zionist day school located in Thornhill, Ont. This richly illustrated, hard-cover cookbook has been out of stock for several months, but happily, it is once again available and would make a wonderful shower or housewarming gift.

All the recipes and ideas in Gatherings were shared by the school's parents, grandparents, relatives, alumni and friends. Under the direction of two dedicated women, Shawna Magence and Carol Lesser, the team of 130 devoted volunteers worked diligently on the book for three years prior to the first edition. All the recipes were triple tested by both professional and amateur chefs, to ensure quality and reliability. Although 900 entries were submitted, just over 300 recipes were ultimately chosen to be included in the book.

Many of the recipes are traditional, but the majority are creative and innovative, helping set new standards for today's kosher cooks. The mouthwatering recipes include Dressed-Up Guacamole, Tortellini Turkey Soup, Gingered Sushi Salad, Melt In Your Mouth Salmon, Basil Pepper Steak, Terra Chip Chicken, Yerushalmi Kugel, Szechuan Noodles: Hot-Tossed Noodles with Peanut Sauce, Simply Sensational Chocolate Cake, Oh Henry Cheesecake and Chocolate Raspberry Brownies.



Gatherings has been enjoyed by cooks of all levels, from the novice to the most experienced. The cookbook is being sold in Israel, England, Australia, and North America. Since the third edition, Gatherings has been distributed worldwide through Feldheim Publishers. With 15,000 copies sold to date, this incredible fundraising project has raised more than $250,000 for Netivot HaTorah's educational special needs program.

The book is now in its fourth edition thanks to the generosity of the Ganz family, who dedicated this special edition in memory of their parents, Julie and Hershel Ganz, the original owners of Carmel Bakery, one of Toronto's first kosher bakeries. The Ganz family covered the costs of printing, shipping and warehousing an additional 10,000 copies so that Gatherings could continue to raise money for Netivot HaTorah. This fourth edition will be referred to as "The Ganz Family Edition" and there is a brief bio about this very special and unique family at the front of the book.

Gatherings is available at various Judaica shops and booksellers. For further information, contact Netivot HaTorah Day School at 905-771-1234, ext. 237.

Here is a quick, easy and yummy recipe that is like a gourmet version of chicken schnitzel. The kids will love it and so will the adults who are "gathering" around your table! Enjoy…

TERRA CHIP CHICKEN

1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 tbsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
6 boneless chicken breasts
1 egg
1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. lemon and herb spice
1 (170 g) bag Terra chips, crushed
1/3 cup margarine

Preheat oven to 350. In a small bowl, combine flour, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Dredge chicken breasts in mixture. Set aside.

In another small bowl, beat egg, mustard, lemon juice and lemon and herb spice together. Set aside. Place crushed chips in a large bowl. Dip chicken first in egg mixture, then in crushed Terra chips. Place chicken breasts in roasting pan.

In a small saucepan, melt margarine. Drizzle on top of chicken. Place roasting pan, uncovered, in oven. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes.

Tips: To crush chips and still maintain texture, put them into a sealable plastic bag and use a rolling pin for crushing. For a finer texture, crush chips in a food processor.

Terra chips come in a variety of flavours and colours. Other types of potato chips can be used. Serves 6. Preparation time: 15 minutes.

Advt.

Celebrate with the Stars

People often have the misconception that planning a wedding, bar or bat mitzvah has to be a stressful and tedious experience," states Marla Kay, organizer of "A Celebration of Stars," a trade show which assembles a large variety of party professionals serving the Jewish community.

"As a bridal and party consultant over the past 20 years, I know how wonderful it is to plan a simcha. There are so many details to be looked after. For the past 10 years at each of my shows, I have brought together over 60 professional "stars" of the party industry to display their wonderful products and services."

This year, the Celebration of Stars Wedding, Bar and Bat Mitzvah Show will take place on Tuesday, March 24, 2009 at Meron Banquet Hall. It starts at 6 p.m. and runs until 10:00 p.m.

When you attend the Celebration of Stars Show, all of your entire party needs will be represented and you will be able to meet our party's finest on an informal basis. Each of the various stages of party planning will be available and by having more than one company displaying their unique talents in a particular category, you have the choice of which individual will suit your needs. You may choose from a variety of party professionals who will strive to maintain the highest standards of excellence in their particular area of expertise. You will be offered bridal and party consultants, catering (Kosher), invitations, florists, make-up artists, personalized party favours, photography, videography, cakes, creative room decor and centrepieces, orchestras, DJ's, and jewellery & giftware. Some of the "stars" are very well known in the simcha industry and there will also be some new faces as well.

"Every Celebration of Stars Bridal, Bar and Bat Mitzvah Show that I have organized has proven to be so successful for both guests and exhibitors that as soon as I finish one, I begin plans for the next one," says Kay. "Organizing a party is what I do best and I think that it is certainly reflected in my shows."

Come and see for yourself that the Celebration of Stars has got it all and is one show that you don't want to miss. Admission and parking is free. For further information ... contact Marla Kay at **905-669-0777.**

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Cooking shower for brides

Continued from page B15

MOLTEN CHOCOLATE CAKES WITH WARM CHOCOLATE SAUCE

Sauce

6 1/2 oz. dark chocolate, chopped
1/4 cup hot water
1/4 cup heavy cream

Cakes

5 oz. bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped
10 tbsp. (1 1/4 sticks) unsalted butter
3 large eggs
3 large egg yolks
1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
1/2 cup all purpose flour

Caroline Davis demonstrates at cooking shower

For sauce: Melt chocolate in microwave, add 1/4 cup hot water, cream: whisk until smooth. Cool slightly (Can be made two days ahead. Cover, chill. Before serving, rewarm in saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly.)

For cakes: Preheat oven to 450. Butter six 3/4-cup souffle dishes or custard cups. Stir chocolate and butter in heavy medium saucepan over low heat until melted. Cool slightly. Whisk eggs and egg yolks in large bowl to blend. Whisk in sugar, then chocolate mixture and flour. Pour batter into dishes, dividing equally. (Can be made one day ahead. Cover, chill.)

Bake cakes until sides are set but centre remains soft and runny, about 11 minutes or up to 14 minutes for batter that was refrigerated. Run small knife around cakes to loosen. Immediately turn cakes out onto plates. Spoon sauce around cakes. Serve with ice cream.

Brides

Pair reflects on 60 years of marriage

By ELAINE COHEN
Supplements co-ordinator

Jews the world over will agree that 1948 was a very good year. On May 14, Jewry celebrated the declaration of a Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael.

For Notre Dame de Grace resident Beatrice (Bea) Stattner and her fiancé, Canadian World War II veteran William (Bill) Taylor, the date proved doubly significant.

On Nov.14, Rabbi Wilfred Shuchat of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, now rabbi emeritus, officiated at the couple's wedding. The simchah took place at the Mount Royal Hotel. Rabbi Shuchat and Bill were former schoolmates, so it was a mutually gratifying experience.

Bea and Bill Taylor

Stationed comfortably in their apartment, which is located near their first dwelling in the Snowdon area, the congenial couple recently reflected on the past, while commenting on the current scene.

In addition to his regular weekday duties, Bill, a talented drummer, used to head to the Laurentian Mountains every weekend during the summer of 1947 to perform with Joey Kane's band. Bill grins as he confesses it was love at first sight, when he spotted Bea. Mesmerized by her "dainty slim ankles," he insisted Bea drop her date for the evening and meet him after the show.

"In those days, Wooden Acres Hotel was a popular spot for the Jewish community and so my girlfriend and I were there as guests," Bea recalls. Hotel owner Mac Cayne offered a free weekend to couples who met at the hotel and subsequently married. A year after the wedding, the Taylors took advantage of Cayne's offer.

Couple tries to keep as productive as possible

As for their daily living quarters, Bea recalls how hard it was to find an apartment after the war. "Apartments were scarce in the late '40s, and we had to pay key money to acquire a lease. So, we lived with my parents on Hingston Avenue until we were able to find an apartment. We leased a nice one near Congregation Shaar Zion."

Bea, a graduate of West Hill High School, and Bill, who graduated from Strathcona Academy, both held jobs, until Bea stayed home to raise their children. In 1956, they bought a bungalow in Cote St. Luc, where they resided for 43 years. In 1999, they moved to an apartment.

The couple share lots of happy memories but also some very sad ones. In 1954, they welcomed the birth of their daughter, Beverley, but fate intervened 22 years later, when she died of a viral infection.

"It has been the greatest tragedy in our lives," Bill says.

Determined to remain focused for their two sons, the couple pulled through by concentrating on family, work and community life.

"Golf was my saving grace," Bea says, adding she and Bill also played tennis. As soon as their sons, Bob, now 48, and Brian, now 45, were older, Bea returned to work.

Both Bea and Bill had a penchant for selling. For the last 18 years before retirement, Bea was a travel agent. Bill, now 88, retired at age 72. For 45 years, Bill had two careers simultaneously, one as a musician and the other as a sales associate.

Since they always had many interests, Bea and Bill are never bored.

"Sure, there's health issues at our stage of life, but we try to keep as productive as possible," Bea says. They are members of the YM-YWHA, where they attend regular exercise sessions, and everybody is amazed because Bea still bowls.

Bill serves as program chairman for the Cote St. Luc Senior Men's Club. He is also involved in the Brigadier Frederick Kisch Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. They belong to Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom. Bea is a life member of ORT. Bill is a life member of B'nai Brith. They both play bridge.

In 1998, the boys feted their parents at a 50th wedding anniversary party, which was attended by relatives and friends.

Their 60th wedding anniversary was a smaller event, as many of their friends have passed away. The couple enjoyed the presence of their five grandchildren, who range in age from 9 to 17.

As for advice to newlyweds, Bea says, "Tell them to try hard to make it work. I know it's not always easy but keep trying."

Bill adds, "It's natural to have disagreements but keep the communication lines open."

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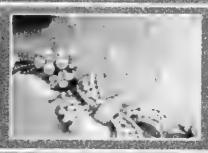

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Brides

The trousseau has changed with the times

By FRANCES GOODMAN PELLATT
Special to The CJN

In the 1930s, when my mother was getting married, her mother gave her a cedar chest filled with linens and blankets and other items needed for the home she would be making with her future husband. According to the literature, this was considered her dowry, "the goods that a woman brings as a gift to her husband upon marriage."

Dowry also called a trousseau

A dowry, also sometimes called a trousseau, a French word that loosely translates as a small bundle, was a way of giving a daughter something of the family's wealth. The custom of giving a dowry, or trousseau ,was popular in the Victorian era, and middle and upper class families believed it was unsuitable to enter marriage without one. But, interestingly, what was started as a custom to provide for the bride often became a burden on poor families who might not be able to afford to outfit their daughters properly in order to obtain suitable husbands.

The trousseau consisted of "a collection of clothing, linens and lingerie and other household goods that a bride would gather together before her wedding, in preparation of becoming a homemaker." She would bring these items with her to the home she would be sharing with her husband.

Growing up, I remember my mother telling my sister and me how she was putting things away – such as knitted blankets – for our trousseaus, in the same cedar chest that was given to her. However, by the time we married, the fashion was to have bridal showers at which a bride would receive the types of gifts that replaced the need for her parents to provide a trousseau. In the 1960s, when my sister and I and most of our friends became engaged, linen, lingerie and kitchen showers for the bride were the norm. At these parties, the bride received many of the items she would require to set up her home with her husband, such as bed linens, pillows, tableware, pots and pans, kitchen appliances and gadgets.

Now in the 21st century, couples are often marrying later in life, in their 30s and beyond, and frequently already have been living in their own fully furnished apartments or homes. Because of this, the concept of the bridal shower has changed with the times, and friends and family have started hosting pre-wedding theme parties for the bride and the groom, with gifts ranging from theatre tickets, activities at gyms and spas to tools for the home, gardening equipment and wine collections.

Bridal showers now the norm

A three- by six-foot chest could never hold all the items the bride and groom collect. Today, they need a van or mini-truck. The cedar chest has become just a nice piece of furniture in which to store things, not necessarily items related to a daughter's marriage.

The literature suggests that "the change in the importance of the trousseau perhaps reflects the more modern and equal standing between genders." This could certainly be true as we find more men taking an interest in the furnishings of their homes, and the fact that both men and women enter marital relationships with financial assets.

But it should be remembered that material goods are just "things." The important items to be brought into the marital home are love, compassion, respect and friendship, and these cannot be purchased. These intangible "bundles" must be taken into the relationship by both partners to ensure a healthy, viable, long-lasting marriage.

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Advertising Feature

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If one place can be said to seamlessly combine grandeur and intimacy under one roof, the Windsor Arms is that place. Voted Toronto's #1 hotel the past two years by Condé Nast *Traveller* Magazine, it's the embodiment of postmodern chic in an historic setting. Nestled on quiet St. Thomas street mere steps from Yorkville — in the heart of Toronto's most fashionable shopping and entertainment district — it's close to the hustle and bustle, yet a million miles away. It evokes the gentility of a bygone era and radiates the kind of old-world charm that is born, not made.

Behind its century-old portals are 28 newly-appointed luxury suites with 24-hour butler service. Discreet luxury combined with an exceptional level of service place it in a category of one among Toronto's luxury boutique hotels.

For owner George Friedmann, who in 1999 purchased the property and restored it to its former glory while adding state-of-the-art amenities like a Kosher kitchen, swimming pool, exercise room and full-service spa, the operative word is *passion*. "You can teach skills, but you can't teach passion," he opines. "Do you want to be served by someone who's going through the motions, or someone who really cares about your dining experience?"

The Windsor Arms' Courtyard Café: where grandeur and intimacy meet

Friedmann should know. Five-a-week breakfasts at the Windsor Arms fuelled a growing fascination with the venue that led to its acquisition. "I had to buy the place just to save money on breakfasts," he grins.

On a serious note, Friedmann allows that although he's proud of the aura of exclusivity with which the Windsor Arms is perceived, he's even prouder of the reality that a world-class facility of this ilk can still host a wedding for as little as $65 per person.

Sixty-five dollars per person?

"That's right", says Friedmann. "We're elite, but not elitist. We've hosted $500,000 weddings, but world-class cuisine and service are a given regardless of your budget. Whether you're two for tea or 200 for a gala affair, we pay attention to detail. *Every* detail."

They have to. Unlike banquet halls where you're one and done — unlikely to return save an invitation to someone else's simcha — the Windsor Arms expects you to come back in the days, weeks and months following your affair. No resting on laurels here; the culinary team lives by the restauranteur's adage — you're only as good as your last meal. "We're here to ensure that the most significant day of your life has a lasting afterglow," underscores Friedmann. "One that will keep you coming back to relive those magic moments again and again."

At the Windsor Arms, those moments consist of breakfast, lunch, dinner, and the afternoon and twilight tea for which it has become so popular that weekend tea times — at ease, golfers — need to be reserved three months in advance.

Before you can return to the Windsor Arms, however, you actually have to *leave* — a sweet sorrow the host establishment manages to delay as long as possible. "I wish this night would never end. How often have you heard that? How often *haven't* you heard it? Here, it doesn't have to," exudes Friedmann. "Why break the spell by stepping into a parking lot when you can stroll into the tea room, slide into the spa, or sip champagne in your room?"

Nor need you doff the glass slipper in the morning, when Sunday Brunch beckons you and your guests. "Continuity," says Friedmann. "Your event doesn't end when the next party needs the banquet hall because there *is* no next party. We hold one event at a time: yours."

Of such beginnings are happily-ever-afters made...

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Lists can be valuable tools

Although some people decide to get married within a month or two after becoming engaged, most plan to wed six months to a year later.

Once the date is set, couples return to their regular schedules, and wedding plans are put on the back burner. Beset with work, family and social commitments, the bride and groom become so engulfed with daily chores that neither realize how quickly the weeks slip by.

However, they can save themselves last-minute frazzled nerves by setting up schedules and jotting down all the things that must be attended to before and on the big day. After completing a task, they can check it off and feel a sense of accomplishment.

The trick is to work like a project manager. Circle the project date – the wedding day – on the calendar and count back, leaving a week for "Murphy." The latter refers to Murphy's Law, which says that "what will go wrong, will," or to another well-known adage, "the best laid plans of mice and men can go astray."

In today's digital society, many people create a website for their wedding, while others make a special folder in My Documents titled "Wedding." Other ways to plan your wedding include using a recipe-style box with index cards arranged in alphabetical order; a calendar with lots of white space for text; or a loose-leaf folder arranged with section headings or an agenda.

Just as project managers file a progress report midway between the time they start and finish an assignment, brides should evaluate their progress at the midway mark. Note what plans have been carried out, what has to be done, changes in plans and future strategies. This is an opportune period to touch base with the caterer, executive director of the synagogue or hotel banquet manager, among others.

To get started, jot down the following schedule and tasks.

Six to 12 months ahead:
- Set a wedding budget
- Decide on type of wedding
- Set date of wedding
- Draw up guest list
- Decide on location for ceremony and reception
- Make arrangements with rabbi
- Formulate honeymoon plans
- Select gown
- Choose caterer and bartender
- Hire photographer/videographer
- Arrange for florist
- Hire orchestra

Four to six months ahead:
- Order invitations, kippahs
- Choose wedding rings
- Reserve accommodations for out-of-towners
- Choose bridal party attendants
- Arrange bridal gift registry
- Get passports for honeymoon
- Make appointment for makeup and hair trials
- Arrange all rentals
- Plan engagement party to introduce families and friends
- Arrange work schedules

Eight to four weeks ahead:
- Buy headpiece, shoes and personal accessories
- Arrange for wedding day transportation
- Send out invitations
- Arrange prenuptials
- Arrange gatherings for out-of-town guests
- Select men's formal wear and rentals
- Call vendors to touch base

Two weeks before the wedding:
- Pick up wedding gown
- Confirm scheduled appointments with hairdresser, makeup artist, manicurist
- Discuss final menus plans with caterer
- Make seating plan
- Check RSVP list
- Record gifts as soon as receiving them

One week before the wedding:
- Provide caterer with final count
- Finalize table cards and seating plan
- Pick up formal wear and accessories
- Schedule rehearsal
- Check on wedding speeches and toasts

Days prior to wedding:
- Pack for honeymoon
- Pack wedding-day bag

Wedding day:
- Attend to hair, makeup and grooming
- Arrive for photo shoot
- Remember to drink liquids and keep well nourished
- Take a deep breath, relax and smile
- Enjoy yourself!

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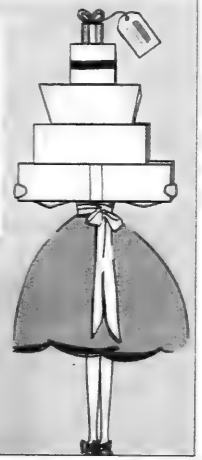

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The daunting task of packing for a family of five

By ANITA SZABADI-GOTTESMAN
Special to The CJN

Packing takes organization and planning

The day I have been anticipating and dreading has arrived. I must begin the daunting task of packing for a family of five for our upcoming trip to Los Angeles to celebrate my nephew's bar mitzvah.

We have been looking forward to this simchah for a long time, sharing in my sister's pride in her wonderful son and our adored nephew and cousin. We have watched him grow from the time we first held him at his brit milah through to the first day of school and then camp and then his entry into high school. Now fully prepared to take on his role within the greater Jewish community, we are set to honour him and celebrate with him and his family.

I have come to pride myself as to my packing skills of late, working hard to co-ordinate outfits and not being afraid to wear a T-shirt or two more than once while away. It took quite a few trips to come to the realization that one pair of black capri's or dress pants can take me from day to night and that a black peep-toe shoe can do the same. I have also learned that laundromats abound all over the world with many, as on a recent family mission to Israel taught me, providing washing and folding services and delivery to my hotel room.

But travelling for pleasure is a whole different story than packing for a simchah. There are so many events and so many required outfits from more casual to conservative to evening wear and then full-out relaxed attire for the traditional Sunday brunch.

It is important to be methodical and organized – one suitcase per family member and several suit bags to house the suits and dresses of not only myself but my husband, two sons and daughter. Thursday morning minyan is first, so a skirt and casual blouse will do. Friday night services follow quickly with more suit-like attire and, of course, Saturday morning for the main event. Relaxation comes after all the festivities, when we switch to vacation mode for a further few days out of the sleet and snow.

But California can be cold and rainy in the winter months, so light jackets, sweatshirts, T-shirts, shorts and jeans can all be worn in one day. Layering is key, but packing so many layers for five people is challenging for even the most seasoned traveller.

First and foremost was to make sure none of us go overweight. Escalating fuel prices have required airline staff to become very diligent in their efforts to stop people from overstuffing their bags. I had purchased some newer, lighter luggage to hedge my bets, and I was set to begin the task at hand.

Never one to rely on lists, packing for an out-of-town simchah requires list upon list. While there are many retail stores in Los Angeles to pick up a pair of socks or underwear, buying a suit and just the right pair of boots has been my tactical mission over the last three months, so just thinking about last-minute shopping before a simchah not in my hometown is out of the question.

Each one of us is colour co-ordinated, all shoes and boots have been spit-shined and a cacophony of men's ties have been rolled alongside various coloured belts and neatly pressed, folded and boxed dressed shirts. One last-minute detail on the list are those plastic collar darts that consistently fall out of every man's dress shirts.

Fast forward to the airport where an airline employee stands in front of a lineup to weigh passengers' luggage. To my great relief, we are not one of the many families left to repack their overstuffed luggage. I spot harried travellers rushing back from the various airport vendors with new luggage to transfer their items. Hand luggage suddenly became overstuffed, and all manner of chaos abounded as initially calm travellers are now at one another's throats, scrambling to repack and rush back into line to proceed to their destinations.

We make it through with flying colours. I secretly pat myself on the back and am relieved that now I can truly sit back and relax and enjoy the long flight.

The baggage claim is quite a hike from our arrival gate, so by the time we get there the luggage has started to descend the carousel. One after another, the bags careen down the ramp until the familiar sound of the carousel grinding to a halt is heard. We count the bags and quickly realize that mine is missing. With the holiday rush, these things happen, says the overwrought baggage claims agent.

Four days later, after the simchah and accompanying festivities are over, my luggage is unceremoniously dumped on my sister's doorstep. But that's a story for another day.

Brides

FG Pellatt photo

The invitation in a bottle

By FRANCES GOODMAN PELLATT
Special to The CJN

There was a young man from Montreal – let's call him Jack – who met a young woman from Vancouver – let's call her Jill. The couple dated, fell in love and decided to marry, dreaming of a destination wedding on a tropical island.

In their 30s, they were determined to do everything on their own, with little advice or assistance from anyone. Of course, both sets of parents shared concerns about their children marrying in a foreign country. Would it be legal? Would it be recognized in Canada? How do you organize something like this? What are the costs? And so on.

Queries regarding the logistics of such an undertaking were heaped on the engaged couple, and over the many months of planning, Jack and Jill did share with family when and where the wedding would take place and that it would be a weeklong affair. However in response to the many other questions, it was always, "Plans are in the works, nothing is finalized yet, we'll let you know."

Invitation gave a glimpse of upcoming wedding

Eventually, family members bowed to the secretive pair's wishes and waited for further news regarding the wedding plans. And what a surprise they all received! While visiting in Montreal with Jack's family, the couple presented his parents and siblings with gold-paper-wrapped "crackers" – the kind you pull at New Year's Eve and confetti falls out. But when they pulled on the ends of these crackers, instead of confetti, bottles fell out, each filled with white sand and tiny seashells and a note attached by a ribbon with the printed inscription "Wedding Day."

Surprised and excited, and a bit confused, they carefully pulled out the corks on their bottles and gently extracted the delicate tissue-like paper on which was printed a beautiful poem, an original rhyme written by the creative couple. Jack's mom immediately read the poem aloud, part of which was, "Please come watch us wed by the setting sun. We've booked your bed, we're gonna have fun! Come celebrate with us where it's always sunny. Wallets aside, this will cost you no money. Please don't protest, don't be dismayed. Enjoy the rest, 'cause it's all been paid. And it gives us joy to share with you, so please just accept our gift, just say I do."

Amazed and in shock, Jack's family reread the poem, glancing in disbelief at one another and at the authors of this wonderfully unique wedding invitation. All were at a loss for words, not only because of the impressive, extraordinary invitation in a bottle, but stunned by the generosity of the bride and groom.

Murmurs of "are you crazy," "are you sure" and "unbelievable" echoed around the room and then silence ensued as no one knew what to say. Finally, Jack's brother joked, "I guess we have to get you a really special wedding present now."

A few days later, when the couple gathered with Jill's family, the reaction was similar. After the initial surprise and astonishment, Jill's brother repeatedly uttered, "We can't accept this, we can't accept this," until his girlfriend said, "I think the poem says that they'd just like us to accept and not protest."

Eventually calming down he admitted that he thought the whole thing was pretty cool. On the other hand, Jill's parents' reaction was opposite. They became very quiet – which Jill notes is not usually a good sign – and then there was a flurry of whispering between the two of them.

"My dad spoke finally and thanked us for the gift," said Jill, although her mother, obviously overcome with emotion, didn't say anything, but later shed tears of joy when Jill asked her how she felt.

Of course, the invitation was well received and accepted by everyone and certainly set the tone for their dream destination wedding on the beach. All the siblings expressed feelings of being exceptionally touched by such an act of largesse on the part of their brother and sister, and were totally impressed with the ingenuity and classiness of the invitation in a bottle presentation. Their parents affirmed that they felt blessed and honoured to be the ones who raised these artistic, resourceful and most generous young people.

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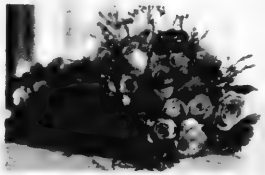

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Parliamentarians meet in U.K. to mobilize against anti-Semitism

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF and DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporters

Canada has assumed a historic leadership role in the global fight against anti-Semitism.

At last Tuesday's first-ever Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism, the 12-person Canadian delegation, led by Jason Kenney, minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, reaffirmed Canada's firm support of Israel.

The Canadian delegation was the largest delegation at the event.

Conference organizers – who succeeded in drawing experts and public figures from 42 countries – said they faced challenges unmatched by anything they've seen for decades and could not have anticipated the urgency when they scheduled the event last year, coming as it did just a month after Israel's war in Gaza prompted a spike in anti-Semitic incidents all over the world.

Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Jason Kenny

Kenney's speech to the conference reflected Ottawa's firm pro-Israel position and its intolerance of all forms of anti-Semitism.

"One can criticize Israeli policies without being anti-Semitic. But the argument is not about criticizing the politics of the Israeli government. Lord knows there's enough of that in the Knesset. The argument is with those whose premise is that Israel itself is an abomination and that the Jews alone have no right to a homeland. And in that sense anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism," Kenney told the coalition.

Last week, Kenney was called a "professional whore" by the leader of the Canadian Arab Federation for his unabashed support of Israel.

Aside from Kenney, the other Canadian parliamentarians in attendance were Liberal MP and former justice minister Irwin Cotler – one of the organizers of the conference – and Liberal MPs Anita Neville, Carolyn Bennett, Raymonde Folco, Hedy Fry, Joyce Murray and Bob Rae, as well as Conservative MPs Randy Hoback, James Lunney and Scott Reid, and Liberal Senator Jerry Grafstein.

Presenters at the conference said the number and scope of anti-Semitic incidents worldwide have risen to levels not seen since the Holocaust. New technologies make the spread of hate across borders easy and quick. And last month's outbursts of anti-Semitism from London to Caracas show a well-spring of hate against Jews just waiting to be tapped.

In demonstrations in January against Israel's operation in Gaza, criticism of the Jewish state quickly turned to anti-Semitism, analysts said, with banners comparing Israelis to Nazis and Gaza to the Warsaw Ghetto.

Continued on page 29

CUPE Ontario calls for Israel boycott

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Jewish groups are condemning the decision by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) to pass a controversial motion Sunday that called for an academic boycott of Israel by Ontario universities.

The motion, voted on at a meeting in Windsor by a committee that represents CUPE Ontario's 200,000 university workers, encourages union locals to pressure Canadian universities to boycott Israeli universities – not individual Israeli academics – and to urge Ontario universities not to "conduct research that benefits the Israeli military," a CUPE Ontario news release said.

According to the union's statement, the motion calls for educational events on campus that would inform the public about Israel's "military assault on civilians in Gaza and its ongoing occupation of Palestinian land" and it encourages union locals to research military connections between Ontario and Israeli universities.

Canadian Jewish Congress released a statement that expressed its "sadness and bitter disappointment" at the union's decision.

Mark Goldberg, CJC Ontario region vice-chair, said the decision to "support the proposed discriminatory resolution represents another low point in the proud history of the Canadian labour movement's involvement in international affairs."

Continued on page 24

Protesters march against CUPE Ontario's anti-Israel resolution vote in Windsor. [*Matthew Ford photo*]

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Netanyahu asked to form goverment – please see page 27

The News in Brief

CANADA

Dance Troupe Boycott

VANCOUVER — Israel's famed Batsheva Dance Company faced pickets at its Vancouver debut last week after local artists and activists called for a boycott of the troupe to protest Israel's war in Gaza. The group performed at the Vancouver Playhouse on Feb. 20 and 21. A local video artist, Jamie Griffiths, called for a boycott of the troupe earlier this month, and last week, a co-founder of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel put out an open call for protesters to picket the events. The troupe has faced protests in other cities on its current North American tour, including Chicago and Pittsburgh. Canada-Israel Committee spokesperson Paul Michaels told the Georgia Straight that a boycott would be "counter-productive," since "Israeli culture, more than anything, has helped promote cross-cultural understanding."

WORLD

New Kosher Cheese

LISBON — For the first time in more than 500 years, a dairy product has been granted a hechsher in Portugal. A well-known local cheese, supervised by the chief rabbi of Porto, a city in northern Portugal, is the first dairy product to be certified kosher in Portugal since its Jews were expelled in 1497. Serra de Estrala cheese is supervised by Rabbi Daniel Litvak, an emissary for the Israel-based Shavei Israel, an outreach group for descendants of Anousim, Jews who converted against their will hundreds of years ago. The owner of the factory who asked the rabbi to supervise his cheese descends from Anousim.

Covert War On Iran

LONDON — Israel is assassinating Iranian nuclear scientists as part of a covert war against Iran's weapons program, western intelligence analysts told London's Daily Telegraph. The paper says United States intelligence sources claim that Israel is using hit men, sabotage, front companies and double agents to disrupt Iran's illicit weapons project. "The aim is to slow down or interrupt Iran's research program, without the gamble of a direct confrontation that could lead to a wider war," an intelligence analyst said.

Baha'i Men Accused

TEHRAN — Iran has accused seven Baha'i leaders of spying for Israel. The men were arrested in Iran eight months ago, the Washington Post reported. An indictment will be issued this week, Iran's state news agency said. The charges, which include "espionage for Israel, insulting religious sanctities and propaganda against the Islamic republic," could mean the death penalty if the men, members of a religion banned in Iran, are convicted. Baha'i global headquarters is in Haifa.

Death Penalty Sought

SANAA — Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty for a Yemeni Muslim who admitted to killing a Jewish countryman. The verdict on Abdul Aziz Yahya al-Abdi will be announced March 2, AFP reported. Abdi, 39, shot Masha Yaeish al-Nahari, a 30-year-old father of nine, in December. Abdi told the court he told the Yemeni Jewish community in a letter to "convert to Islam or leave Yemen, or I would kill them." Nahari was confronted near his home in the town of Raydah and told to convert. When Nahari told Abdi to leave him alone, Abdi shot him several times with a submachine-gun.

France Takes Responsibility For Shoah Role

PARIS — For the first time, France officially recognized its guilt in helping murder Jews during World War II.

On Feb. 16, the country's high court, the Council of State, took the opportunity to hold France "responsible" for sending French Jews to Nazi camps, when asked about a related case on reparations to a Shoah victim.

The council said France must "solemnly recognize the responsibility of the state and the collective prejudice suffered," because the country "permitted or facilitated the deportation from France of victims of anti-Semitic persecution," the daily le Figaro reported.

It took until 1995 for former French president Jacques Chirac to become the first French leader to publicly take responsibility for sending 76,000 French Jews to Nazi camps. Some 2,600 survived, the Paris-based Foundation for the Memory of the Shoah says. Until Chirac's statement, German occupiers under the French Vichy regime were officially blamed for killing Jews. But Chirac's comments didn't hold the legal weight of the ruling.

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Chavez's 'ugly rhetoric' endangers Jews: rabbis

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Two local rabbis expressed the Canadian Jewish community's deepening concern over the welfare of the approximately 25,000 Jews in Venezuela in a meeting with that country's consul general in Montreal.

Rabbis Chaim Steinmetz and Reuben Poupko spent about one hour with Adolfo Figueroa in his office, in their capacity as co-chairs of the Rabbinic Caucus of the Canada-Israel Committee. They conversed with him through a translator.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz

"We told him we believe there is a direct line between the ugly rhetoric in the upper echelons of the Venezuelan government and media and the desecration of the synagogue, because that rhetoric is emboldening the anti-Semites," Rabbi Poupko said afterward, referring to the Jan. 31 vandalism and ransacking of the Tiferet Israel synagogue in Mariperez, near Caracas. They view this incident as the most blatant manifestation of a deteriorating situation for Jews in Venezuela.

The rabbis said President Hugo Chavez's anti-Israel statements, especially since the Gaza war, are putting Jews at risk. Numerous remarks of this nature have been documented by such Jewish groups as the Anti-Defamation League and the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

He has also singled out Jews, they said, citing Chavez's call for the Venezuelan Jewish community to dissociate itself from Israel's Gaza offensive, which Chavez termed a "holocaust."

Figueroa handed them a copy of a Feb. 12 press release from Elias Farache, president of the Israeli Association of Venezuela, a central Jewish organization, confirming his satisfaction with and gratitude for the criminal investigation of the synagogue desecration. It included a personal thanks to Chavez and a renunciation of attempts to implicate the government in the crime.

The Montreal rabbis regard the statement with skepticism, given the circumstances the community finds itself in.

The rabbis also voiced their opposition to Venezuela's severing of diplomatic relations with Israel in late January to protest the Gaza offensive and the suffering of the Palestinians.

Rabbi Poupko said he pointed out the irony in the fact that Venezuela maintains official ties with Iran, "a country that has vowed to destroy Israel" and that Venezuela was silent throughout the eight years Hamas fired rockets into Israel from Gaza.

Rabbi Reuben Poupko

"I suggested his government's concern for human rights should encompass Israelis as well," Rabbi Poupko said.

The meeting was "correct and polite" overall, but Figueroa vigorously defended the strength of his country's democracy and emphasized that Jews have full rights and enjoy the government's protection.

He noted that suspects in the synagogue attack were quickly arrested and that Chavez has vowed that such a thing should not happen again.

When the rabbis cited a number of reports that put Venezuelan democracy into question, Figueroa suggested that a conspiracy exists in the western media to besmirch the Chavez government.

"The key point of this meeting is that the Venezuelan consul general will make a report to his government that Jews in Canada are exceedingly concerned about what is happening and that we are watching closely," Rabbi Steinmetz said.

Figueroa handed the rabbis another press release from VTV, the public Venezuelan television network, dated Feb. 10, quoting Roy Chaderton Matos, Venezuelan ambassador to the Organization of American States. He says that the country's "state policy is based on respect towards all religious denominations" and that anti-Semitism is not "an important trend."

He denounced charges that the national government was behind the synagogue attack as an attempt to "destabiliz[e] the democratic process" in the lead-up to the referendum that was held Feb. 15 enabling the president to hold office indefinitely.

London's Jewish community speaks up for Israel

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

LONDON, Ont. — In the face of mounting negative press about Israel in the local media, London, Ont.'s Jewish community has turned to activism.

Although London is the province's fourth-largest city – and the 10th-largest in Canada, with close to 500,000 residents, according to the 2006 census – its Jewish community only has about 2,800 people.

So when more than 200 of them turned up on Feb. 11 to hear Israel's consul general in Toronto, Amir Gissin, talk about prospects for peace in Israel at the London Jewish Community Centre, LJCC board members took it as a good sign their nascent pro-Israel advocacy measures are making an impact in the community.

Prior to Gissin's lecture – the final one in the LJCC's annual "Israel Lecture Series" – the consul general and The CJN were invited to a private, pre-lecture dinner and conversation with members of the London Jewish Federation's new Israel Advocacy Committee.

At the meeting, committee members spoke with urgency about the need for small communities like theirs to combat the rising tide of anti-Semitism and distortions of the realities on the ground in Israel being offered up by various professors at the University of Western Ontario and being reflected in local media.

Committee member Terry Marcus said that the community's old method of relying on a few, recurring "public advocacy volunteers" to speak for them is outdated.

Now, he said, "we've had enough. The same way Israel said to Hamas. Now we have to do something."

Marcus said he hopes his community's resurgent advocacy efforts might also serve as a template for other small Jewish communities around the country.

Esther Marcus, executive director of the London Jewish Federation, told The CJN that the speaker series was initiated in 2003 to help the London community feel "more connected" to Israel, but it has since become more geared toward helping community members defend the Jewish state.

Continued on page 26

Terry Marcus, left, a member of London's Israel Advocacy Committee, presents fellow committee member Jacob Peretz with a gift following the conclusion of the London Jewish Community Centre's annual "Israel Lecture Series." The series is the brainchild of Peretz.

[Carmi Levy photo]

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From the editor's desk...

Last month, in advance of the commemoration of International Holocaust Memorial Day on Jan. 27, the Jewish Agency's Global Forum against Antisemitism issued a troubling report in Jerusalem that indicated "there was a significant and unparalleled rise in the number and severity of [anti-Semitic] incidents in January 2009."

Israel's decision to defend itself against the genocidal terrorist regime in Gaza did not sit well with the latent or overt anti-Semites, who were offended that Jews should fight back.

To be sure, the images of war in Gaza were distressing. The civilian deaths were agonizing.

Not all criticisms or demonstrations against Israel, it must be acknowledged, are the manifestations of anti-Semites.

But those individuals burning with hatred for the Jewish state are never bothered by facts, or truth, or context, or reason, or Israel's right to live as the only state in the world for Jews. They simply blame Israel. And every image they see broadcast on television is a pretext for unbridling in public the venom they hold tight in private.

Amos Hermon, chairman of the Task Force, stated that "levels of anti-Semitism climbed to a new two-decade high during Operation Cast Lead [the war in Gaza] with incidents also marked by their unprecedented levels of violence."

"Most of the recent anti-Semitic attacks," Hermon added, "were perpetrated by local Muslim groups and primarily in western Europe. There were approximately 100 incidents in France and a similar figure was given for Great Britain, including violent assault on Jews and Israelis in the Diaspora, attacks and desecration of synagogues, cemeteries and Jewish institutions; attacks on the personal property belonging to Jews; as well as virulently anti-Semitic propaganda during rallies and mass demonstrations, including drawing specific false analogies between Nazi crimes in the Holocaust and IDF activity in the Gaza Strip."

Jews are alarmed. How can it be, we ask ourselves worriedly, that the harrowing echoes of the 1930s are reverberating in the streets, in the media, in some union halls and in academia? We shake our heads, disbelieving that the year 2009 seems to indicate nothing in the advance of civilization.

And we hope that others, too, are alarmed. For as we know, the fight against anti-Semitism is not a Jewish fight alone. It is, or should be, humanity's fight.

Thankfully, there is a great deal of evidence that 2009 is not 1939 in terms of the fight against anti-Semitism. There are indeed a great many people who have joined the fight.

Last week, some 125 parliamentarians from Europe and around the world met in London for the founding conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism. (See the related stories and Perspectives essay in this issue of The CJN.) Canadian member of Parliament Irwin Cotler and British member of Parliament John Mann are the co-founders of the coalition. It was a historic occasion.

The Canadian parliamentary delegation was the largest at the conference. It included minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, Jason Kenney, MPs Cotler, Carolyn Bennett, Raymonde Folco, Hedy Fry, Randy Hoback, James Lunney, Joyce Murray, Anita Neville, Bob Rae, Scott Reid and Senator Jerry Grafstein.

Kenney reiterated the government's resolute stance in the fight against anti-Semitism: "I hope that this forum will be the beginning of an ongoing process of educating and mobilizing parliamentarians throughout the world, and through them political formations across the spectrum, and indeed national governments to combat the scourge of anti-Semitism. I also hope that this will be the beginning, not the end, of this important work."

Despite the heartening signal it sends to us, the significance of the inaugural meeting of the inter-parliamentary coalition should not be overstated. It will not, it cannot stanch the flow of the anti-Semitic bile that unceasingly pours forth from the various headwaters of Israel's delegitimizers.

For example, Durban II, the second World Conference Against Racism, is scheduled to be held in Geneva in April during the week of Yom HaShoah v'Hagvurah. The preparatory papers that have been filed for the conference with the United Nations already single out Israel as a "racist" state.

President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela is building an alliance with his counterpart in Iran. That alliance, we know, is predicated upon abuse of Israel.

Closer to home, the Ontario University Workers' Coordinating Committee of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) voted on the weekend in Windsor to support a boycott of Israeli academic institutions. Len Rudner, regional director of Canadian Jewish Congress, Ontario region, spoke for us all when he said: "It boggles the mind to consider that CUPE Ontario's leadership has no matter more pressing than promoting a resolution that is bigoted on its face and discriminatory in its intent. It is unfair, unbalanced and unhelpful."

The sick and sordid expressions of anti-Semitism can be overwhelming. But we must never be overwhelmed. Steeled by history and by our over-riding duties to our children and to the world, we must and we will always fight back. – ***MBD***

SeeJN

ISRAEL ONCE AGAIN TO THE RESCUE

Ten immigrants were brought to Israel last week from Yemen in a secret rescue operation carried out by the Jewish Agency in co-operation with the Yemenite Jewish Federation of America. The group included nine members of the Ben-Yisrael family from Ra'ida, a community that has recently suffered harassment and persecution. Approximately 280 Jews live in Yemen – 230 in Ra'ida and some 50 in the capital of Sanaa. Many fled Sanaa about a year ago because they were being harassed by a group connected to Al Qaeda. Anti-Semitism, fomented by Muslim extremists, has increased in Yemen in recent years. The tension reached a climax last December when Moshe Yaish Nahari, a father of nine, was murdered by a Muslim extremist. A verdict against his alleged murderer is scheduled to be handed down March 2, according to reports. [Israel photo]

Jewish learning festival draws over 400

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The 440 people who attended Limmud, the Festival of Jewish Learning on Feb. 15 at the University of Toronto's Bahen Centre, are part of a phenomenon that began in England 27 years ago and has expanded to 46 countries.

More than 32,000 people have participated in Limmud worldwide, according to organizers here.

The "joy of Limmud is that [because a first-choice session is full], we often end up in a session we might not have chosen, and it's just as stimulating and exciting," said Ruth Margles, co-chair of the event's logistics team.

As a reporter, I unexpectedly ended up having the type of experience she was referring to.

The Toronto event – which first ran in 2004 when British-born Toronto accountant Peter Sevitt brought it here – was divided into five 70-minute segments, each with up to 10 sessions for participants to choose from.

A closing ceremony, featuring an "Instant Choir" that was one of the final offerings of the day, was followed later that evening by a Cool Jew Cabaret presented off-premises in conjunction with the Koffler Centre of the Arts.

The 49 daytime sessions spanned a wide range, from author Warren Bass on "The Obama Presidency," to a belly dance workshop.

For me, the session on Kaddish and the Grieving Process was personally compelling and, I felt, of wider general interest too. I am saying Kaddish for my father, and, as a baby boomer, I am part of a large cohort mourning parental loss.

At the session, CBC television producer Harry Schachter – who produced a radio documentary on Kaddish and who was joined by retired grief counsellor Thelma Feldman – spoke of the significance of the prayer and of his experiences as a "not really very religious person" saying Kaddish for 11 months after his father died in late 2006.

Novelist Sidura Ludwig

For the other session I would attend, I decided to divide my time between "Reflections on Being a Jewish Mother of Mixed Race Children," because it speaks to the diversity of today's Jewish population; and "Young Jews Talk about Judaism and the Jewish Future" – an ongoing concern in the Jewish community – where young adult panellists and their audience shared ideas on issues including intermarriage and how to reach out to non-day school graduates.

Instead, on a whim, I decided to start the day in communications consultant Lil Blume's workshop on "Writing Your Jewish Family Story," when I passed the door to her room. Blume's enthusiasm and practical advice, along with the participants' stories, almost tempted me to stay for the entire 70 minutes.

Also, in a fortuitous turn of events, one of the participants turned out to be my Scottish-born almost-cousin, Les Kelman, program co-ordinator of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto). His late aunt was married to my grandfather's cousin, a Russian immigrant to Glasgow who visited Toronto once, in the 1940s. Les and I had met in the 1970s, and corresponded by e-mail a few years ago. We agreed to meet over lunch and catch up.

Kelman and at least two other attendees were motivated to attend Limmud because of the reputation of the original event, a multi-day retreat. He and Dublin native Merriel Gordon both have sisters in England who urged them to attend the Toronto spin-off.

Although Winnipeg-born, Toronto-based novelist Sidura Ludwig, 32, never went to Limmud during the three years she lived in England – at the time she found it expensive – she also said it sounded like "a fabulous program," and that she was excited to be invited to Limmud Toronto as a presenter on a panel about "Wandering Jews."

Channa Sargon, who teaches adult Bible classes, said it was uplifting for her to learn about Jewish text at Limmud. As well, she said, she found the event "amazing" because of the mix of different segments of the Jewish community – "young, old, Orthodox and hippies."

Event chair Sharoni Sibony, 32, said she was pleased as well by the mix of "the heady, deep intellectual" sessions and the "interactive, participatory stuff."

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Be realistic about peace, ex-envoy advises

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The new U.S. government headed by President Barack Obama should pursue peace in the Middle East on a realistic basis, says former American ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk.

In a teleconference with journalists last week, he suggested that previous U.S. diplomatic efforts to achieve a rapprochement between Israel and the Palestinians were simply too ambitious.

The interview was sponsored by the Israel Project, a non-profit organization devoted to educating the public about Israel.

Indyk, a two-term ambassador to Israel during the years of the Oslo peace process and the Clinton administration, described Obama's appointment of George Mitchell as special envoy to the Middle East as an unmistakable signal that he intends to try to defuse the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Martin Indyk

But in a warning, he said that the Obama administration should lower its sights by not aiming for unrealistic "transformational" objectives.

Indyk – the author of a newly published book, Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East – noted that the prospects for a Mideast breakthrough are presently slim.

"The landscape out there is pretty bleak," he observed, comparing the current situation to the more hopeful Oslo era. "The circumstances are different today."

The Palestinians are split into seemingly irreconcilable Fatah and Hamas camps, while Israel's recent general election virtually split the country in half, politically speaking.

As a result, Indyk said, hopes for a two-state solution are "fast evaporating," with both Israelis and Palestinians no longer believing that a peace agreement is necessarily possible.

Nonetheless, the Obama administration should not sit idly by. "We need to push on," he declared. "We have to try to generate a positive dynamic to change the landscape."

He added that Israel's future can only be guaranteed by real peace and security.

For Israel and the Palestinians to succeed in peace talks, there must be national unity on both sides, said Indyk, who is currently director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institute.

A narrow right-wing government in Israel will be unstable and thus hard-pressed to move forward in negotiating peace, he said.

Still, the leader of the right-wing Likud party, Benjamin Netanyahu, will be careful not to antagonize the United States should he form Israel's next government. As a sop to Washington, Netanyahu will probably ease conditions for Palestinians in the West Bank.

More likely, he will try to resume peace talks with Syria, which were broken off nine years ago, renewed last year through Turkey's mediation and then suspended yet again.

Indyk said he's not sure whether Syria will ever accede to Israel's demand to sever ties with its allies, Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas.

But he expressed certainty that Syria will not resume talks with Israel unless there is progress on the Palestinian front.

He urged the United States to lay the groundwork for Israeli-Syrian talks by engaging Syria.

In a critique of the previous Bush administration, Indyk said that its attempts to isolate Syria were unsustainable and "did not make a lot of sense."

Indyk said that a recent Arab League peace initiative should be considered by Israel because it represents "an important shift" in Arab attitudes toward the Jewish state after the "three nos" of the 1967 Khartoum Arab summit.

Calling the Arab League initiative "a 23-state solution," he said that Israel would be making peace with all the member states of the Arab group if it accepted its proposals.

Returning to the Palestinian question, Indyk warned the United States not to deal directly with Hamas. Such contacts will undermine its moderate rival, Fatah, enable Hamas to claim a huge victory and "finish off" Palestinians who wish to make peace with Israel.

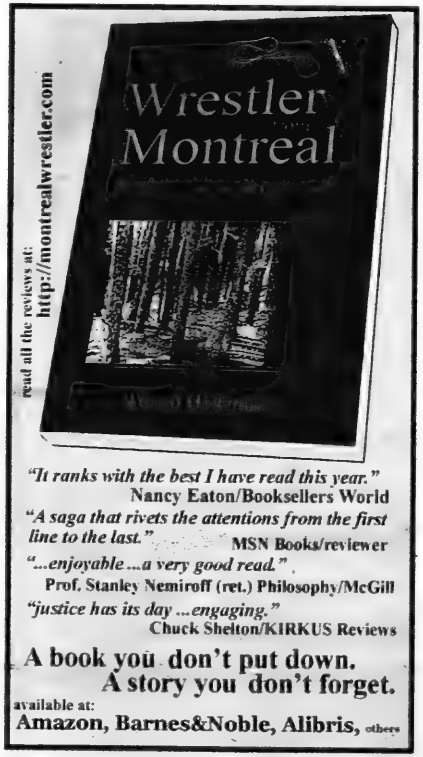
As an alternative to U.S.-Hamas talks, he said it would be far more appropriate for Arab states to engage Hamas so that it accepts Fatah's authority and its role as a negotiator with Israel.

Indyk declined to say whether Israel should negotiate with Hamas. But he pointed out that the Israeli government already has de facto relations with Hamas by virtue of Egypt's current efforts to forge another truce.

He said that Israel would be justified to keep the Gaza Strip's border crossings closed if Hamas continues to smuggle weapons through tunnels and fires rockets at Israeli communities.

Striking a gloomy note about Iran's nuclear program, Indyk said, "It's hard to believe that [Iran's] program, at a minimum, will be suspended. I'm not optimistic."

Due to these and other reasons, he said, the United States should engage Iran in direct talks.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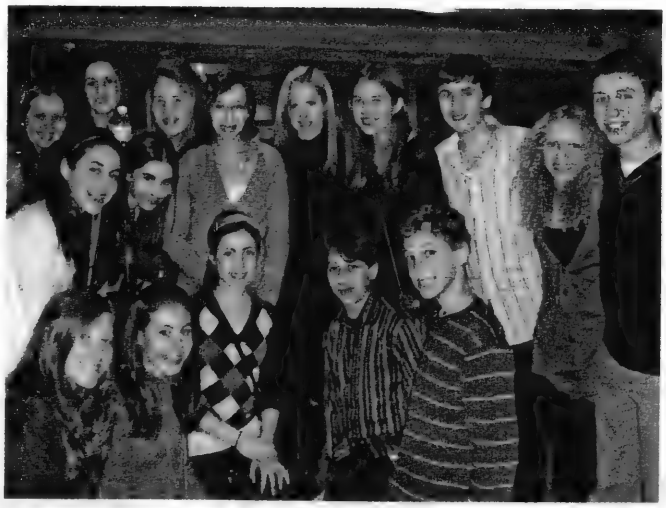

LEARNING LEADERSHIP: A group of Grade 8 students from Bialik Hebrew Day School took part in the 26th annual World Affairs Conference at Upper Canada College. This year's theme was "The Leadership Imperative: Focus on Solutions." Students listened to renowned speakers and attended plenary sessions and discussions on topics such as poverty, slavery, climate change, energy and education. Pictured with the Bialik delegation is Dr. Samantha Nutt, centre rear, founder and executive director of War Child Canada, who delivered the keynote address.

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Al-Jazeera English to apply for licence

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Al-Jazeera English, the Qatar-based 24-hour international news and current events television channel, plans to apply for a broadcasting licence in Canada within the next few weeks and hopes to be on the air by the fall.

'Objective' reporting & Al-Jazeera
please see page 17

But if Canadian Jewish Congress and the Canada-Israel Committee prevail, the licence won't be granted unless the station complies with guidelines set down several years ago by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission.

Five years ago, the CRTC granted Al-Jazeera English's parent company, Al-Jazeera Arabic, permission to broadcast in Canada if it didn't violate Canadian hate laws and if Canadian cable and satellite carriers offering it kept recordings of all its broadcasts.

Canadian Jewish organizations had accused Al-Jazeera Arabic of carrying anti-Israel and anti-Semitic material.

No Canadian cable or satellite providers agreed to pick up Al-Jazeera Arabic, which was launched in 1996 and is now available in more than 100 countries, including Israel.

Six years after Al-Jazeera Arabic submitted its application in Canada, Al-Jazeera English – which launched in 2006 and claims to be watched in 140 million households – is seeking a licence.

Its bid will be presented to the CRTC by its sponsor and carrier, Ethnic Channels Group, a Canadian, Toronto-based multi-ethnic broadcaster that offers programming in a number of languages ranging from Arabic and Hebrew to German and Russian.

Tony Burman, managing director of Al Jazeera English, said last week that it has never broadcast anti-Semitic comment and has always been balanced and fair in its coverage of Israel and the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Burman, the former editor-in-chief of CBC News, said that Al-Jazeera English's "fair, thorough and restrained" reporting of Middle East affairs is intended "to inform, not inflame."

Bernie Farber, CEO of Congress, is skeptical.

"We have always opposed the request by Al-Jazeera for a broadcast licence," he said. "The only true record we have of Al-Jazeera is the parent Arabic station, which has broadcast anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial."

Farber said he might revise his views if Al-Jazeera English complies with CRTC regulations. "At the very least, these guidelines would have to be fully honoured. Anything less would be unacceptable. The key guidelines [centre] around the need for a delay in broadcasting so that any hate-mongering could be dealt with prior to coming on air, and signed guarantees of responsibility to ensure that Canada's laws pertaining to hate promotion and broadcast standards would be honoured."

Asked why Al-Jazeera English shouldn't get a Canadian licence when it's available in Israel, Farber replied, "Israel must deal with issues pertinent to its geopolitical circumstances. Canada is in a much different situation with laws that address broadcasting, all of which must be adhered to."

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Canada-Israel Committee, said that Al-Jazeera has a record of advancing "a skewed narrative of the past and present without regard for objectivity or the journalistic standards we have established in Canada."

He added: "There is a sufficient body of evidence about Al-Jazeera English to support concerns about the nature of its coverage and its tendency to generate anti-Semitic sentiments here in Canada."

Fogel said Israeli viewers have "the resources and opportunities" to balance Al-Jazeera's "manipulated information."

He added: "Here in Canada, however, the audience is considerably more naive and lacks the capacity to view the broadcast in a critical way, or to seek alternative perspectives."

As a result, Canadian viewers may draw "tainted and compromised" conclusions.

Saying there's "significant demand" for Al-Jazeera English in Canada, Burman appeared to reject Farber's demand that it comply with special CRTC guidelines.

"Anyone who takes the time to watch Al-Jazeera English would agree that these sanctions are completely unnecessary. Al-Jazeera English is available and popular in England, and it is regulated by Ofcom, the body that oversees England's media organizations and deals with issues of impartiality and fairness. In two years of broadcasting, Al-Jazeera English has never experienced a serious problem. Further, Al-Jazeera English journalists are required to follow a strict code of ethics."

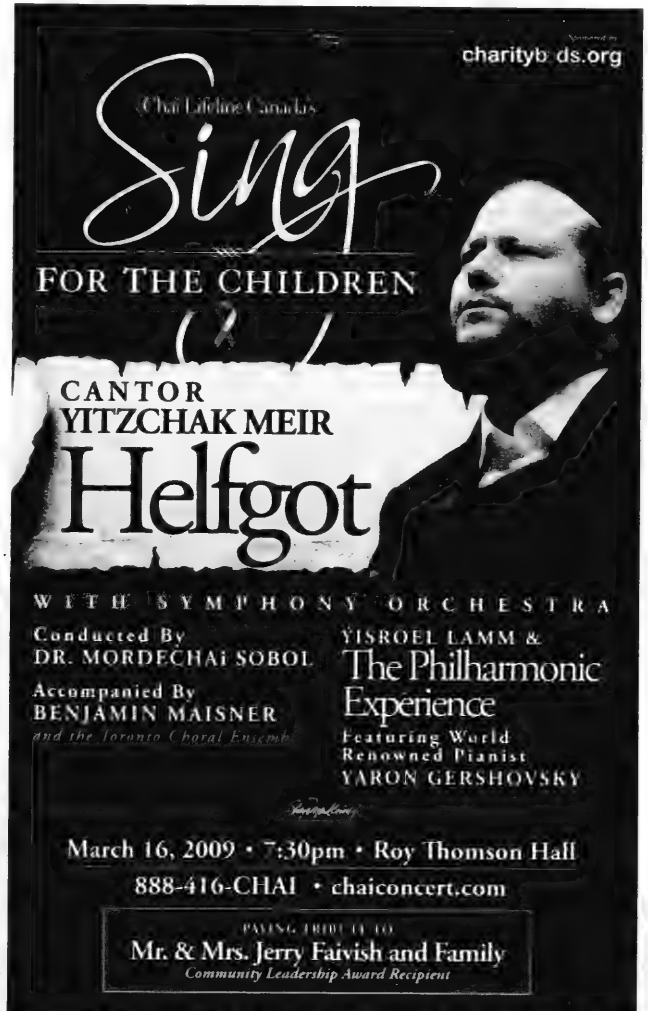
Burman said that Al-Jazeera English would never carry anti-Semitic comments or Holocaust denial, which would be contrary to its code of ethics and offensive "to us and our viewers."

During the recent Gaza war, he said, Al-Jazeera English was the only international English news channel to cover it from both sides.

"Reviews of our coverage were overwhelmingly positive," he said.

"Our coverage of Israel is now and has always been balanced and fair. People are often surprised to learn that Al-Jazeera English is broadcast throughout Israel... Israeli politicians speak directly on Al-Jazeera, on both the Arabic and English channels."

Burman said that Al-Jazeera Arabic made it possible, for the first time, for Israelis to reach the Arab world unfiltered.



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Bigotry's advance guard

There is a growing sense that the fate and reputation of York University in Toronto as a welcoming place of higher learning and enlightened intellectual inquiry hangs tenuously in a balance weighted increasingly at one end by a small cadre of bigots, thugs, poseurs and impostors.

As reported in The CJN, Jewish students feel ever more threatened by anti-Israel, anti-Semitic rhetoric and, of late, even menacing behaviour.

The chilling, ugly anti-Israel scene at Vari Hall, followed by the potentially dangerous mob siege of Jewish students in the Hillel lounge, were the latest, if most frightening, tugs of the university toward low and shameful standing.

In response to those events, York's president, Mamdouh Shoukri, issued a statement in which he urged students to respect one another. "It really is time for the student leaders at the organizational and club level to consider the effects of their actions on their fellow students. Every student at York has the right to go about their activities free from intimidation or disruption to their academic lives." York's vice-president for students, Rob Tiffin, added: "Students have a right to study in an atmosphere of personal safety, mutual respect and tolerance from other students – especially, student organizational and club leaders. No one should feel singled out based on their political beliefs."

These views are commendable, high statements of purpose and protection.

But they are a bare-bones minimum that comprise merely the floor on which all college and university structures in a free and democratic country must stand.

To be more than slogans, however, these floorboard statements must be propped up. They must be enforced and reinforced, constantly, diligently and unfailingly.

The floor at York University is crumbling.

Many Jewish students are not able "to go about their activities free from intimidation or disruption to their academic lives." They are indeed "singled out based on their political beliefs."

Jewish community leaders have rightly demanded of the university's administration that it ensure that student codes of conduct are strictly followed. Where codes are lacking, they should be toughened. Where legitimate complaints under the codes are hindered or blocked, they should be expedited.

The atmosphere at York will likely become even more polluted with noxious anti-Israel hatred during the singularly vile Israel Apartheid Week. Tyler Shipley, spokesperson for CUPE local 3903, which represents contract faculty and teaching assistants at York, has announced that his union will try to get the university to cut its ties with Israel.

York's administration is being tested by bigotry's advance guard, which singles out only the Jewish state and wishes to see it disappear from among the family of nations. They must not fail that test.

25 years ago in The CJN

Yaakov Levinson, head of Israel's Bank Hapoalim, was found dead at his Ramat Gan home, an apparent suicide. He had been under investigation for alleged illegal financial transactions. He and his supporters had insisted on his innocence.

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Three sons took Birthright Israel trips

Recently, the last of my three sons to participate in the Birthright Israel program returned from his visit to Israel. The Jewish community is second to none for its philanthropy and other contributions to society, but this one is something special.

The Israeli government, the ultra-generous philanthropists, including the Bronfman family, and so many more, as well as the project leaders, are owed a great debt and are to be thanked by myself and world Jewry. At a time when we are faced with the threats of low birth rates, indifference, ignorance and over-assimilation by many fellow Jews, their contribution is a true blessing.

My sons were raised in the community and the religion, but their Birthright Israel trips just cemented the connection. I don't know what difference this will make for the most recent arrival, but the first to go returned an ardent Zionist planning to make aliyah. The second has started eating more kosher and is training as a madrich in the community.

Even more miraculously, they have a cousin who recently participated. His father is a dear fellow, but a Jew in name only, raised secularly and atheistically, and his mother is Thai. He came back "blown away" and determined to know more about his Jewish roots.

My personal thanks to all responsible. May they be able to continue this for a long time. To those who are eligible, I say, "Go!" I wish I could.

Ken Frankel
Montreal

Dry Bones
KABOOOM!
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BUT THE ONLY CRASH THAT'S HEARD AROUND THE WORLD IS
THE CRASH OF THE ECONOMY!

* * *

Freedom of speech can be abused

The conviction of Omar Bulphred in Montreal for firebombing Jewish institutions is a predictable extension of the rampant anti-Semitism now taking place on many university campuses ("Seven years for 'jihad' firebombing too little, CJC says," CJN, Feb. 19). While freedom of speech is a cherished right, it can be abused by allowing the organization of groups such as Students Against Israeli Apartheid. The recent Israeli election puts the lie to the fact that Israel is anything like an apartheid state, as Arabs freely vote with Jews and their representatives take seats in the Knesset. Hatred against Jews and Israel is fomented by people who rail against the Jewish state but who remain strangely silent about atrocities being committed in Sudan, Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan. University presidents and senates should take positive action against groups who preach hatred and racism. How can one expect intelligent and civilized debate when a so-called august body like the United Nations Human Rights Council spends 90 per cent of its time condemning Israel and ignores flagrant human rights abuses by its own member states?

Bert Raphael
Toronto

* * *

Will Obama be good for the Jews?

As I watched the unrelenting media coverage of U.S. President Barack Obama's recent inauguration and black Americans repeating the phrases, "We had a dream" and "Not in our lifetime" and the word "transformational," it evoked a memory of another transformational event when we Jews had occasion to repeat the same words and euphorically rejoice in a dream fulfilled.

In his column, CJN editor Mordechai Ben-Dat suggests that most people of our generation will be able to recall where we were on Jan. 20, 2009 ("A historic inauguration," CJN, Jan. 29). Most Jews of my generation can recall where we were on May 14, 1948. It was one of the greatest days in Jewish history. Without the virtual reality of TV and the immediacy of the moment, we listened on our shortwave radios to David Ben-Gurion as the Declaration of Independence was read and signed, concluding with the words "The State of Israel is established. This meeting is adjourned" (it was the first live transmission from the new radio station Kol Yisrael). It was Erev Shabbat, so festivities were delayed until Sunday, May 16.

The euphoria was short-lived, as Arab armies invaded soon after. African-Americans had a 200-year-old dream. We, the Jewish people, had a 2,000-year-old dream. But 60 years after we thought our dream had come true, with the vilification of Israel, I wonder if the dream, at best, is merely an illusion or at worse a nightmare. Transformational events bother me as they often lead to unintended consequences. As I watched the inauguration ceremony, I asked the question that is always in the back of our minds: will Obama be good for the Jews?

Jack Chisvin
Toronto

* * *

Who's minding the store?

Hello? Anyone there? Once it could be a typo, but three times in last week's front-page story? In the quote, "They were saying, 'Who's campus? Our campus.' We were saying, "Who's campus? Everyone's campus,'" the word "who's" should have been "whose," as in "Whose campus? Our campus!" ("Students under 'siege' at York U," CJN, Feb. 19.)

Anita Kern
Toronto

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Strategies to fight anti-Semitism globally

By HERSHELL EZRIN & BERNIE FARBER

In the opening of A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens wrote: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times;… it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness;… we had everything before us, we had nothing before us…"

As we joined with 125 parliamentarians representing 42 countries and 80 experts at the London Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism last week to devise practical ways to combat rising anti-Semitic trends, these thoughts echoed in our minds. Here, at the historic Palace of Westminster and the magisterial surroundings of Lancaster House, co-hosted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and several British ministers, Jews and non-Jews were encouraged to form a common purpose and voice to eradicate anti-Semitism in all its manifestations.

Contrast those scenes to the daily sessions where horrific and disgusting examples of the rise of new forms of anti-Semitism were unveiled and analyzed. Added to classical forms and stereotyping of anti-Semitism was the linkage of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, the pernicious rise of Islamist extremist hate, and finally, state-encouraged or assisted anti-Semitism as practised by Iran and Venezuela.

By meeting's end, the tabling of evidence was counterbalanced by the genuine, outspoken, public commitment of non-Jewish parliamentarians and their governments to act in solidarity and implement innovative ideas to fight this ancient scourge of the dislike and hatred of the unlike.

Beyond the physical threats and dangers rest the emotional turmoil and psychological damage of anti-Semitism, the sense of isolation. In one public session, representatives from across Europe, North America, and even Tunisia and Morocco, spoke about the need to act globally to eradicate anti-Semitism, and outlined concrete programs and plans. This time, Jews were not alone.

In the gilt-edged Lancaster House almost 60 years ago, 12 nations, including Canada, negotiated a permanent organization called NATO to protect Europe and North America. Today, in this same hall, a Canadian minister, Jason Kenney, accompanied by a group of 10 Canadian parliamentarians, Conservatives and Liberals, spelled out his government's ambitious plan to fight anti-Semitism and to restore civil dialogue. We had the clear impression that a new, determined strategy to defend global Jewish communities was being articulated in the London Declaration pledging to fight anti-Semitism, signed on the final day of the conference on behalf of all participating nations. Kenney's voice was joined by the foreign ministers of Italy and the Czech Republic, the vice-president of the German Bundestag, and numerous other leaders.

We face a long and hard battle, and our goal will suffer many ups and downs. But the London Declaration outlines a clear road map for action, best practices sharing and joint commitment.

Ironically, being able to capture with hard evidence different aspects of the current situation ultimately helps in harnessing broader intellectual and physical resources to act. For example, the U.K. Community Security Trust (CST), which co-hosted the London conference, has developed one of the leading evidentiary methodologies for tracking and understanding anti-Semitic incidents. Last week, it noted that a decrease in anti-Semitic incidents in 2008 (for the second year running) was totally overshadowed by an unprecedented rise during and after the Gaza operations. Other European countries present reported similar upswings. The implementation of a more sophisticated evidentiary system based on common standards is one of the goals of the London Declaration. Time and again during the conference, the need to have hard evidence and not let emotion overtake our demands for action was stressed.

Tombstones in Kapsovár, Hungary, were defaced last year. [Israel file photo]

The extent to which state-sponsored or encouraged anti-Semitism has grown was chillingly underscored by the current climate in Venezuela. An article that appeared in one of the most rabid Venezuelan government-sponsored media outlets has been rightly described as a call for a Venezuelan Kristallnacht. It states: "Denounce publicly with names and last names the members of the powerful Jewish groups present in Venezuela, indicting the companies they own in order to establish a boycott… in that respect, [for] capitalist agents, as these Zionist Hebrews are, the thing that hurts them most is the pocket. It is inappropriate to buy their products and go to their stores… Question the existence in Venezuela of educational institutions for Jews only, as if they were a different class from our population, since it is not possible for the existence of a state within a state… Publicly challenge every Jew that you find in the street, shopping centre or park, [and] take a stand shouting at them in favour of Palestine."

Italian parliamentarian Fiamma Nirenstein spoke of how the Italian Parliament handled the presence of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at a UN Food and Agriculture Organization conference in Rome last year. No official member of the Italian government's Chambers of Deputies or leadership met with him. This was the most direct way to send a message that his Holocaust denier's views and threats to Israel's existence are unacceptable. Other parliamentarians agree that political isolation combined with stricter adherence to international commitments on combating anti-Semitism are tools to be used more frequently.

Denis MacShane, a former minister for Europe in the U.K. Labour government and founder of the all-party enquiry into anti-Semitism in the United Kingdom, was one of a number of speakers to call on the left to be "as vocal in denouncing anti-Semitism as it is in criticizing Israel."

Jews, non-Jews unite for common purpose

In a current article in Progress, he says that "to attack what the government of Israel does is legitimate politics. But what is not legitimate is to turn criticism of Israel into a condemnation of Jews and to paint them again today, as in the past, in negative stereotypes that deny their faith, their birth, their right not to be frightened and their right to support their affiliations and their causes."

MacShane notes that "parts of the British, European and world left have now thrown in their lot with the rise of a new reactionary anti-Semitism… We only hear hate against Israel… open anti-Semitic attacks that took place by Jew-haters who used the anger over the Gaza conflict to attack Jews… for the many who revealed the depth of their hatred of Jews… the issue is not Israel but the very existence of the Jews… There will be no peace in the Middle East unless anti-Semitism is removed as a component ideology of those who oppose Israel. The left has to be as tough in denouncing the Hamas charter, with its litany of hate against Jews, as it is tough in demanding more jaw-jaw and less war-war from Israel."

Other participants focused on Islamist extremist anti-Semitism.

In the expert sessions, several trends that create a new world of anti-Semitism were identified that require different strategic responses. They included the emergence and the exponential growth of the Internet – anti-Semitism, which was once marginalized, is now readily available. As David Harris of the American Jewish Committee said, "the Internet is the greatest single incubator, repository and distribution channel of anti-Semitism."

A number of innovative strategies were identified, including legal and cyberspace definitions. There was universal agreement that legal sanctions coupled with education and cyber technology must work in tandem. One of the most unusual was the establishment of a critical reasoning and use program in education curricula when using Internet sources because so much of what is on the Internet is not verified or anything more than rumour or hearsay. Another idea gaining ground is the assignment of study programs by university professors to critique Internet entries and identify mistakes.

A second trend was dealing with the newly globalized western communities and new and emerging communities that are unfamiliar with Jews or their issues. We need to go back to basics with these communities in order to establish new relationships not only to tackle anti-Semitism, but also to protect the general fabric of a pluralistic society.

With the aging of a Holocaust generation of survivors, liberators and eyewitnesses, Jewish communities need a whole new dimension and vocabulary to present the Holocaust narrative, which is in danger of being hijacked by opposing forces.

Finally, several experts discussed the vulnerability of Israel's losing a perception of like-mindedness to liberal societies, especially with a younger generation.

Of all the strategies and tactics reviewed, one stood out for broader emulation. It was the development of all-party enquiries into the state of anti-Semitism in individual countries. Such a committee establishes a clear focus and accountabilities, a specific timeline for co-ordinated action by government ministries, agencies and law enforcement groups and a political check against any attempts at appeasement. It ensures that the fight against anti-Semitism becomes validated by all parties, and avoids anti-Semitism serving as a wedge issue among politicians. It puts the onus for leadership of the battle on non-Jews who have the most credibility in pushing this agenda within-civil society.

John Mann was the driving force behind the London conference. With his steering committee members, including Irwin Cotler, the battle against anti-Semitism has been taken to a new level. In our view, the committee's goal to adopt an effective framework to confront anti-Semitism on a global level is being achieved. Kol hakavod to the leaders for their vision.

Hershell Ezrin is CEO of the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA). Bernie Farber is CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress.

Opinions

We Jews have survived worse

You may have noticed that your brokerage accounts have been a lot smaller recently. Financial monkey business has left the world economy in the worst financial situation in 70 years, and your accounts are feeling the pain.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

Meltdowns can crush your spirit. After losing everything you own, it's easy to lose our confidence, too. Even billionaires can surrender to despair.

A leading German businessman, Adolf Merckle, threw himself under a train. The financial crisis took his money. A crisis of faith took his soul.

But we can cope with this financial meltdown. I say this with some authority, because I'm Jewish. Jews are world experts on crisis. Jews have endured expulsions, inquisitions, crusades, pogroms and a genocide, and yet we've lived to see another day. Jews have found hope in the most hopeless of situations.

Jewish optimism is reflected in our holiday schedule. Some like to joke that the theme of all the Jewish holidays is, "They tried to kill us. We survived. Let's eat." Actually, the joke is true. We celebrate Passover because we survived Pharaoh, Sukkot because we survived the desert, Purim because we survived Haman, and Chanukah because we survived the Seleucid Empire. Jewish holidays are all variations on a recurring theme. Why?

Repetition has a powerful effect on character. The Sefer Hachinuch says that the multiple commandments commemorating the Exodus are necessary because "man is transformed by his actions." Constant commemoration leaves a permanent imprint on one's personality. All these holidays remind us that redemption isn't a pipe dream. By consistently reliving the memories of past triumphs, Jews remind themselves, to use the words of David Ben-Gurion, that "in order to be a realist, you must believe in miracles."

Even at the worst times, you can find hope by remembering the past. Yaffa Eliach recounts an improvised seder in Bergen Belsen. Rabbi Israel Spira, the Bluzhover Rebbe, spoke to the children and quoted Isaiah's messianic vision: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." He told the children that they, too, could hope for redemption, to walk out of darkness into light. The message is one every Jew has heard repeatedly: redemption is possible, and you must believe in miracles.

The recession has hurt many people. But no matter how hard the situation, we must never abandon hope. After all, in a few weeks, there will be another holiday, reminding us that if you want to be a realist, you must believe in miracles.

Student unions should stick to student issues

Earlier this month, McGill University students voted 436 to 263 to postpone indefinitely a Students' Society resolution condemning the "bombings" of "educational institutions in Gaza." The initiative paralleled similar resolutions that passed at other Canadian universities, including the University of Toronto and York. But a clear majority of McGill students proclaimed that they didn't want their student union developing a foreign policy. As pro-Palestinian forces try to import yet another round of the Middle East conflict to campus, the McGill majority endorsed the vision of a student society devoted to students' needs and enhancing campus society, not pontificating about political conflicts far away.

Gil Troy in Montreal

True, it's the academic's conceit to comment about everything. We enjoy passing judgment from our cushy ivory towers, inviting our students to join our know-it-all chorus. Few students need such encouragement, compelled as they are by their own youthful vanity to judge the world that their elders have bequeathed them.

Student political organizations convey that spirit, legitimately. Campuses should be filled with many social, political and religious organizations, reflecting diverse attitudes, ideologies and political persuasions. I'm proud of my students who campaigned for now-U.S. President Barack Obama, and my student – note the singular – who supported Senator John McCain. I love seeing young Liberals and Conservatives electioneering, and I applaud the passion of those from beyond the conventional political spectrum, too.

Nevertheless, students' partisan identities shouldn't intrude on student union politics. The inspiration that so many students drew from Obama was commendable, but it would have been appalling if a student union had circulated a motion praising Obama and condemning McCain. This would have turned the student union into partisan Democratic headquarters, making it the student disunion.

Following a similar rationale, anti-Israel resolutions are divisive and distracting, as well as disproportionate and discriminatory. They sabotage the modern university's commitment to diversity. All great universities today welcome students of different religions, nationalities, races and creeds. Pronouncing on a hot-button issue, implying that students share some consensus position, imposes thought control and presumptions of uniformity where none exist. This posture of unity will foster disunity, importing passionate divisions into where they don't belong. Such incendiary, irrelevant resolutions distract from what should be a student society's mission: improving students' experiences.

Five years ago, engineering and commerce students at Concordia University rebelled against their student union's political obsessions. Students were embarrassed that all too often, job recruiters related to Concordia as a place characterized by radical, sometimes violent, pro-Palestinian stands rather than as a centre of academic excellence. The students elected new leaders committed to helping students, not developing a foreign policy.

Finally, the resolutions themselves give a slanted view of a complex conflict. They ignore the role of Hamas, a terrorist group with an anti-Semitic, genocidal charter that advocates Israel's destruction, in triggering the recent violence, cowering behind educational institutions, mosques and hospitals, and targeting Israeli schools.

Where were these concerned students when 10,000 Palestinian rockets bombarded Israel? Where were student unions when these rockets fell on Sapir College in the Negev or on nurseries, kindergartens, elementary schools and high schools in Sderot and its environs? Where is the outrage that smuggled Grad missiles menaced Ben-Gurion University, or that Soroka Hospital in Be'er Sheva – which serves Jews, Christians, Muslims, Druze and Bedouin equally – is targeted? Does anybody care that Soroka had to place sandbags on its sleep lab and evacuate its maternity ward under fire?

More profoundly, has anyone condemned Hamas for threatening chances of a two-state solution by using the Gaza pullout to launch rockets and dig tunnels rather than building a functioning civil society? The umbrage at Israel's actions seems false and disproportionate, thus discriminatory, singling out the Jewish state for special scrutiny and particular enmity.

Campuses are fragile ecosystems, special places where many different people congregate to live together and learn together. Campus leaders have a special responsibility to avoid polluting the atmosphere with poisonous rhetoric, biased behaviour and irrelevant assaults on fellow students' sensibilities. Indulging in foreign policy postures regarding explosive issues, particularly the Middle East, fails that test – raising tensions rather than alleviating them, doing nothing to solve the conflict and importing tensions from 10,000 kilometres away too close to home.

Confronting campus anti-Semitism

Things are tough on university campuses these days, where anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism have gained a foothold. As the rhetoric, intensity and decibels rise, many students across North America report feeling shocked, assaulted and intimidated by what they encounter.

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

Campus anti-Semitism comes in as many forms as in the rest of society. Although prejudice against Jews and Judaism is "the oldest hatred," to use the phrase of historian Robert Wistrich, it has the dubious fortune of finding itself endlessly renewed. New Republic literary editor Leon Wieseltier recently pointed to "religious varieties and secular varieties; theological varieties; political varieties and cultural varieties; old varieties and new varieties… of the right… and of the left. And… anti-Zionism."

The so-called "Israel Apartheid Week" (IAW) is becoming increasingly and disturbingly a feature of North American campuses. Its demonstrations and exhibitions bring together what historian Jonathan Judaken has identified as five "vectors" of contemporary anti-Semitism: Holocaust denial, anti-Zionism, anti-Semitism of the far left, anti-Semitism of the Islamic world and anti-Semitism couched in anti-racism.

Very few universities have prohibited IAW outright. It's difficult for universities to ban it, because doing so would appear to be censorship and would run up against the concept of academic freedom. While academic freedom means slightly different things in different countries, the underlying principle is, in the words of the U. S. Supreme Court, that "teachers and students must always remain free to inquire, to study and to evaluate, to gain new maturity and understanding; otherwise our civilization will stagnate and die."

The American Association of University Professors elaborates: "Universities… interpret, explore, and expand that knowledge by testing the old and proposing the new. This mission… inspires vigorous debate on those social, economic and political issues that arouse the strongest passions. In the process, views will be expressed that may seem to many wrong, distasteful or offensive. Such is the nature of freedom to sift and winnow ideas. On a campus that is free and open, no idea can be banned or forbidden. No viewpoint or message may be deemed so hateful or disturbing that it may not be expressed."

Universities, however, must also ensure the safety of students and abide by the laws of the land. Canadian universities must balance the principle of free speech with laws governing hate speech, libel and defamation. All campuses must prevent physical violence. And it's difficult to reconcile the notion of rigorous debate with slogans and clenched fists.

As universities find ways to balance intersecting and sometimes opposing principles, are campus communities helpless in the face of such movements as IAW? I don't think so. After the initial shock of disturbing and distorting images and rhetoric, students are finding their voices to counter its arguments.

It's crucial to arm oneself with knowledge. In addition to knowledge about Israeli history, politics and culture, books and courses that deal with the history, strategies and manifestations of anti-Semitism help to contextualize contemporary attitudes and to explain to others why certain remarks and arguments are anti-Semitic.

While Israelis hold diverse opinions and may be critical of government policies without being anti-Semitic, criticism of Israel quickly morphs into anti-Semitism, especially when it denies Israel's right to exist. Anti-Zionism often adopts the tactics and mentality of anti-Semitism.

Three classic anti-Semitic strategies are scapegoating, demonizing and isolating Jews.

Scapegoating means blaming a person or group for things that go wrong, as Jews were blamed for Germany's problems under National Socialism, or as Israel is deemed the root cause of political unrest in the entire Middle East, or globally.

Demonizing means presenting a person or group as evil by nature – considering Jews degenerate and immoral, or Zionism inherently racist. These ways of thinking have isolated Jews in the face of oppression, just as claims that Israel is racist, apartheid or Nazi-like have cast Israel as a "pariah state," outside the family of nations.

Some scholars of anti-Semitism have begun to refer to its latest manifestation as "Judaeophobia" and "Israelophobia." These new terms tell progressive groups on campus – who actively oppose such things as homophobia and Islamophobia – that current anti-Israel discourse reflects an irrational fear that leads to hatred and discrimination.

Students attend universities to get an education. Increasingly, they're also empowering themselves to become educators.

The Kirshner File

Letter from Daytona Beach

When Harry and Bella Pepper arrived in Daytona Beach during World War I, this pleasant, sun-dappled seaside resort in northeastern Florida – probably best known for the Daytona 500 at the Daytona International Speedway – was still something of a raw frontier town.

Sheldon Kirshner in Florida

"Florida was just opening up," said their youngest daughter, Doris Katz, who was one of the first Jewish children born here. "It was the new world."

She chuckled. "My parents said that Florida was the land of alligators and mosquitoes."

The Peppers moved to Daytona Beach, in Volusia county, from Providence, R.I. "My father thought it had a lot of potential and was beautiful. And Florida seemed easier to get to from the East Coast than California."

Daytona Beach was incorporated as a town in 1876, but long before this happened, European explorers from Spain, Britain and France set down roots here, establishing sugar cane, indigo, rice and cotton plantations.

During the three Seminole wars in the 19th century, the plantations were burned down by the indigenous aboriginal inhabitants, setting off a flight of white settlers.

In the wake of the U.S. Civil War, during which Florida seceded from the United States and joined the Confederacy, the region was resettled and orange groves sprang up.

But even as the first buds of prosperity appeared in Florida's abundant sunshine, the new settlers were faced with malaria and yellow fever epidemics and a shortage of fresh water.

These problems were overcome, and once the railroad was finished in 1886, developers began building hotels to accommodate tourists converging on Florida.

By the early 1900s, Daytona Beach had made a name for itself as the cradle of speed.

Automobile enthusiasts had discovered that its hard-packed beaches were ideally suited for car races – which took place in the sedate suburb of Ormond Beach – and land speed records were set here. Shortly afterward, the Peppers arrived, becoming one of Daytona Beach's first permanent Jewish residents.

Until then, said Katz, virtually the only Jews found in Daytona Beach were tourists from the north escaping the harsh winter.

Harry Pepper, however, was not all that interested in the fine weather. He was a merchant who wanted a fresh start. "He did a little of everything, and then got into real estate and retailing," she said.

As she recalls, many of the Jewish shop owners were practically the only merchants who offered African-American customers the convenience of credit. Back then, Daytona Beach, like most or all towns in Florida, was segregated.

"It was very hard on black people," said Katz. "I never had a black classmate until I attended university."

The Jewish community went along with the flow, accepting the racial mores of the day, but Katz's brother, a lawyer, turned into a civil rights activist.

A bird's eye view of Daytona Beach

Katz was born in 1925, six years after her sister, Florence Schott, became the first Jewish girl born in Daytona Beach.

As Katz recalls, she was always the only Jewish kid in her class. "But it was never a problem. There were no signs of anti-Semitism."

Not really.

While still in high school, Katz, an outstanding student, was shocked and saddened to learn that a senior administrator had tried to shunt her aside as the school's representative. "He didn't want a Jew representing the school."

And one of Daytona Beach's most elegant hotels posted a sign that read: No dogs or Jews. "There was some institutional anti-Semitism," she noted.

Reflecting on that era of explicit racial intolerance and discrimination, Katz, a resident of Ormond Beach, mused, "Daytona Beach has changed tremendously. It has grown up."

As she tells it, the first Jewish inhabitants of Daytona Beach had to work hard to be practising Jews.

"There were no institutions or rabbis. I remember going door to door asking for $5 donations to pay for the visiting rabbi's salary."

Her father, a pillar of the community, opened his home to prayer services and had a hand in founding the local Jewish cemetery and Temple Israel, the first shul in town and in Volusia county.

A Conservative synagogue, one of several shuls in Daytona Beach today, it was founded in 1924 on the bank of the Halifax River. Its current rabbi, Amy Mayer, is the first female rabbi in its history.

Katz has personally witnessed the development of the Jewish community.

"I've seen it grow from 60 to about 1,300 families and from one synagogue to three or four. Daytona Beach has always been a good place to raise children," said Katz, whose son and daughter live elsewhere in Florida.

Her husband, Mervyn Katz, was a businessman. She married him in 1946 after dropping out of Brown University, where she studied liberal arts on a scholarship.

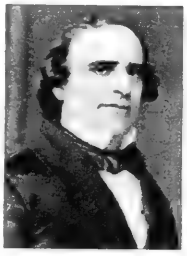
Of the estimated 4,000 to 5,000 Jews in Daytona Beach and environs, a fair proportion are from out of state.

Gloria Max, the executive director of the United Jewish Appeal Federation, came here from Toronto in 1983.

Jeff Bigman, a lawyer originally from New York City, and his wife, a physician, settled here in 1995. Bigman is one of the founders of the Jewish Heritage Festival, the first one of which was held last year.

Surprisingly, perhaps, neither he nor Max had ever heard of two of Florida's most illustrious Jewish sons, David Sholtz and David Levy Yulee, whom Katz described as "a powerful man to whom we can point to with pride."

Sholtz (1891-1953), the 26th governor of Florida, was born in New York City but started a law practice in Daytona Beach after graduating from university.



David Levy Yulee

By turns a one-term member of the state's House of Representatives, a state attorney and a city judge, he was governor from 1933 to 1937, when the Depression cast a giant shadow on the nation.

Credited with founding the Florida Parks Service and the Citrus Commission, Sholtz passed a workers' compensation law and introduced free textbooks in public schools.

In 1938, he ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate, losing the Democratic primary to Claude Pepper, a political powerhouse not related to Katz's parents.

Yulee (1810-1886) was Florida's first U.S. senator and the first known American Jew to sit in the Senate.

Born on the island of St. Thomas, West Indies, he was the son of Moses Elias Levy, a Sephardi Jew from Morocco whose dream was to build a colony for Jews in Florida's north central interior, near Daytona Beach. (He failed.)

Brought to Florida as a child, Yulee was raised on his father's plantation. A lawyer, Yulee was partially responsible for drafting the state's first constitution. After Florida was admitted to the union in 1845, he was elected to the U.S. Senate.

Defeated for re-election in 1850, he was re-elected in 1855. He served until 1861, when he withdrew to sit in the Congress of the Confederacy. Imprisoned in 1865 for supporting the Confederacy, he spent his final years as a railroad builder.

Both Levy county and the town of Yulee are named after him. Plaques in his honour are found at the Chamber of Commerce in Fernandina Beach and the Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park in Homosassa.

"He was quite a personality," said Katz.

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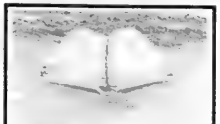
Jewish Life

We need more inclusion

By RABBI MICHAL SHEKEL

I dare say most of us have had the experience of being the last chosen for a team-or not chosen at all. For some of us, this is a daily experience. My brother is one such individual. Today he would be called developmentally disabled. In his youth, the term was "mentally retarded."



Whatever term is used, the effect is the same. People look at you in a funny way. People avoid you. People are uncomfortable around you. People treat you as less than human – not once or twice, not just when it's time to choose sides for basketball, but all the time, every day of your life.

Even people who are nice to you may do so more out of kindness or pity rather than engage you as the human being you are. We do this when we instil such individuals with saintly traits instead of accepting them as people just like us, all created in the Divine image, all possessing comparable qualities and faults. I know, because I am as guilty of this as the next person, and I should know better.

There are also instances when we as a community should know better. Imagine staring at the steps leading into shul but having no way of reaching the entrance. Imagine being unable to participate because there are no large-print siddurim, no audio enhancement devices or no sign-language interpreters. Imagine being unable to find spiritual fulfilment because you're too worried that your behaviour will be misunderstood and deemed inappropriate. Too many of us need not imagine any of this. We experience it.

This year, we're embarking on a communal effort to know better and to do better. We can't call ourselves a caring community unless we truly embrace all of our members, and allow them to embrace us. That's why last Shabbat in Toronto was designated Shabbat Itanu – itanu means "with us" in Hebrew. It's all-inclusive. We're only a community when all obstacles are eradicated – be they obstacles of age, or physical, mental and emotional differences. Shabbat Itanu was the start of Inclusion Awareness Week, the first in an annual series of events to educate ourselves and dismantle the barriers that exist in our community, be they in our shuls, our schools, our organizations or our attitudes.

This week's parshah, Trumah, provides a wonderful model for inclusion. God instructs Moses regarding gifts for the building of the mishkan (tabernacle): "You shall accept gifts for Me from every person whose heart so moves him" (Exodus 25:2).

The gifts aren't just from individuals of a certain class or of certain abilities. They're from everyone who wants to participate. They range from gold and silver to wood, yarns and goat hair. If God encouraged everyone who wanted to participate to do so, how can we deny access to those whose hearts move them?

Inclusion Action Week is a starting point for each one of us. As Ben Zoma teaches in Pirkei Avot (4:1): "Who is wise? The one who learns from everyone."

Rabbi Shekel is executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis. Her weekly Torah study is available at www.kolel.org.

Why we must find joy in Adar

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

Preparing for Purim involves reorienting ourselves well in advance. In fact, we are told to begin increasing our joy right at the onset of the month of Adar. The sages state that when the month of Adar begins, we are to start amplifying our joy.

Certainly the holiday of Purim is a festival of joy, but why should we start celebrating in advance?

Interestingly, we assume that the holiday of Purim is synonymous with happiness and joy. How could it not be? A terrible disaster was averted. An evil and powerful man, Haman, was brought down, and innocent lives were saved. All this was accomplished through a reaffirmation of Jewish identity, unity and common destiny. Without question, it was a joyous moment. And yet, there's also a downside to the events.

The predicament of exile in which the Jews of Persia find themselves at the beginning of the story hasn't really changed. The Jews begin the Purim story exiled in a foreign empire, and they end the story in exactly that same place. Although the evil decree of Haman did not come to pass, neither could it be rescinded. The only way for the Jews to protect themselves is to deliver a pre-emptive strike against anyone armed and ready to join Haman. The only solution possible is warfare.

Haman's racist and genocidal views are not disproved. They're simply rendered unfavourable to the king, but they remain ever-present within the empire. Although Mordechai is promoted to a high political position, there's no change to the Persian infrastructure. The system that appointed one Haman could well appoint another in the future.

We read the Purim story after having created a context of happiness

In other words, the dilemmas of the Persian Empire remain unchanged for the Jews of exile. They avoid a crisis but cannot solve the underlying cause.

So where's the joy?

Perhaps the sages are aware how easily we would fixate on all the things that go wrong and forget that the orientation of Judaism is to find the joy in our actions. We are told to worship God with joy, yet the worship alone is not enough. It's crucial to begin our joy at the beginning of Adar so that we can read the Purim story after having created a context of happiness. We place the crisis of Purim within our joy and solve it from that vantage point. If we contextualize our world based only on our challenges, we may, in fact, create the very environment that would challenge us the most.

Set the moment to begin changing perspective. Don't wait for happiness to find you. Rather, find those moments that form the basis of a new approach. Begin finding joy as the month of Adar begins. Increase the joy as the month progresses, and then read of a planned genocide against the Jews from within a firm foundation of Jewish joy – that's the strategy Purim gives us to face any enemy.

Thousands of years ago, the sages asked: "Who is the wealthy one?" Most often, the answer is translated as "The one who is happy with what he has." A careful translation, however, shows the answer to be "the one who finds happiness from within what he has."

Jewish Life

Archeology in Israel, Part 1

By ALEX GROPPER

In no other country is archeology as much of a national pastime as it is in Israel.

Archeology has been part of the collective psyche since before the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. In fact, the first excavations in what is now Israel began in the latter part of the 19th century. Needless to say, Jerusalem was among the first places to be excavated.

Past Forward

By the beginning of the 20th century, a number of prominent sites, including Jericho and Megiddo, had already succumbed to the spade of the archeologist. Along with many other intellectual pursuits, World War I put a temporary halt to archeological work in what was then part of the Ottoman Empire, especially when it allied itself with Germany during that bloody conflict.

But the period after World War I saw a flurry of archeological activity in the region. It has been called by many the golden age of archeology in the area of the so-called Fertile Crescent, which stretched in an arc from the Tigris and Euphrates basin in what is now Iraq, through Syria and down along the Mediterranean coast from Lebanon, into Palestine and down into Egypt. This was the era of the League of Nations mandates, during which parts of the now-dismembered Ottoman Empire had been given to the victorious Allied powers of Britain and France. This ushered in a brief time when scholars and others could travel freely from one area to another.

Since Palestine was now a British mandate, the newly formed Department of Antiquities was run from London, although American scholars also played an important role in a number of major excavations. Probably the most influential of these was William Foxwell Albright, who would leave his mark on what came to be called Biblical archeology. Albright was instrumental in developing a number of key techniques that would define the discipline. Chief among them was the use of pottery chronology in dating archeological remains.

Anyone who has visited an archeological site knows that the surface is full of pottery shards. What Albright did was to arrange a sequence, associating various styles of pottery with archeological periods in the history of Israel. One dates the pottery by its shape, size and composition in the same way that someone can tell a 1955 Thunderbird from a Model T. This technique of pottery chronology would revolutionize archeology in Israel and elsewhere.

It was also during the inter-war years that a number of crucial sites were re-excavated. Chief among these was Jericho and Megiddo. The American excavations at Megiddo, run by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, were undertaken on a massive scale thanks to the financial support of John D. Rockefeller whose philanthropic generosity helped to fund the Oriental Institute. For this excavation, even small-gauge rail tracks were built to haul away the enormous amount of dirt that was dug up. The aim of the dig was to uncover the entire mound layer by layer.

It would be the only time such an ambitious project was undertaken. By the middle of the 1930s, the Depression would force the project to scale back its aims. Even more unfortunate was the mess that such an undertaking had created on the mound of Megiddo. Even now, after a number of more recent excavations, Megiddo remains the centre of much controversy, since most scholars consider it the archeological key to unlocking the chronology of ancient Israel.

The era in between the two world wars would also see the start of what would become the foundations of Israeli archeology. Scholars such as Benjamin Mazar (formerly Maisler) of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which had been formed in 1925, would undertake the excavation of a number of crucial Jewish sites. Mazar himself would go on to become one of the founders of the renowned Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University and one of its presidents.

Purim shpiels: ancient and new

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

If you crave the smell of greasepaint and the roar of the crowd but don't expect to be appearing on Broadway or the West End anytime soon, boy do I have a Jewish custom for you: the Purim shpiel. This annual event is a chance for budding Jewish thespians of all ages to don costumes, act out an ancient story with modern twists and turns – and thoroughly enjoy themselves.

Shpiel is a Yiddish word meaning "play" or "skit." As Rabbi Daniel Kohn explains, "a Purim shpiel is actually a dramatic presentation of the events outlined in the book of Esther… providing an opportunity for crowds to cheer the heroes (Mordecai and Esther) and boo the villain (Haman)." Over time, shpiels have evolved into the presentation of humorous skits not just about the story of Purim, but also about leaders and well-known people in the community. **[tinyurl.com/shpiel04]**

Rabbi Kohn quotes Jeffrey Rubenstein, a professor of religion at New York University, who writes that Purim is a holiday characterized by "liminality," a day "in which traditional social boundaries and rules of etiquette are deliberately blurred. Purim is a day to 'blow off steam' for a community by celebrating this ancient escape from destruction." **[tinyurl.com/shpiel06]** Some of that steam blowing is apparent in the early 17th-century Achashverosh Shpiel. You can read some vivid quotes at the Hebrew-language Wikipedia entry on Purim shpiels. **[tinyurl.com/shpiel07]**

Virtual Jerusalem traces the tradition to Talmudic times. It quotes this description: "The boys make a figure of Haman and hang it from the roof four or five days before Purim. On Purim itself, they make a bonfire and throw the figure into the fire. They throw a lot of salt on it [obviously saltpeter-something explosive] so that it will make noise and the boys stand around and sing joyous songs." **[tinyurl.com/shpiel09]**

By the 1500s, "it became customary for Purim shpiels to take place during the festive Purim meal in private homes. Yeshiva students were often recruited as actors, and they would wear masks and costumes." Later on, amateur and professional entertainers were recruited, including groups of touring players known as "shpielers." Nowadays, these plays are performed in countless synagogues and schools. **[tinyurl.com/shpiel03]**

The best Purim shpiel is, of course, the one you write yourself. But if you do need some assistance, there are numerous budding playwrights who have shared their oeuvres online. There's a "participatory, inter-generational" version **[tinyurl.com/shpiel11]**, a Doctor Seuss Purim Shpiel **[tinyurl.com/ shpiel12]**, a rhyming edition from Torah Tots, **[tinyurl.com/shpiel13]** a Rocky Horror Purim Shpiel, **[tinyurl.com/shpiel14]** and some others at MyJewishLearning.com, including "West Side Tsorys." **[tinyurl.com/shpiel15]** Please note that you may not share the same sense of humour as the people who penned these plays.

I did stumble across one other fascinating Purim shpiel, titled "Esther, Queen of Persia: a scriptural play in five acts by Janie Jacobson." Published in 1921, it has been professionally scanned and can be downloaded in its entirety. **[tinyurl.com/shpiel15]**

And if you'd like to take in a performance or 300, it seems there is no shortage of people who have taped their shpiels and uploaded them to YouTube so that the whole world can benefit from their work. **[tinyurl.com/shpiel05]**

The words "poignant" and "Purim shpiel" don't usually appear in the same sentence, but that is the only way to describe one special play that took place more than six decades ago. In March 1945, Solly Ganor was a prisoner in Dachau when an inmate known as Chaim the Rabbi stood in the snow, donned a paper crown made out of a cement sack and shouted, "Haman, to the gallows! Haman, to the gallows! And when I say 'Haman, to the gallows,' we all know which Haman we are talking about!" **[tinyurl.com/shpiel05]**

Ganor continues his story, "We were sure that he has lost his wits, as so many did in these impossible times. By now, there was about 50 of us standing gaping at the 'rabbi,' when he said: 'Yidden wos iz mit ajch! Fellow Jews, what is the matter with you! Today is Purim! Let us make a Purim shpiel!'"

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

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Yaldeinu raises funds to send Bolivians to Canadian camps

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Yaldeinu is planning to raise funds to bring Bolivian children to Canada for three weeks at a Jewish summer camp.

An organization that raises funds to preserve Judaic values through formal and informal education for Diaspora communities, Yaldeinu is teaming up with Jewish students and educators to try to stimulate a dwindling Jewish community in the poorest country in Latin America, Bolivia.

Michael Ettedgui, the founder of the non-profit charitable organization, said his recent trip to Latin America opened his eyes to the need of the Bolivian Jewish community.

"I was there [in Bolivia] in October when I went on a tour of various cities in Latin America to find communities that aren't being helped by Diaspora organizations. The country that hit me the most, that affected me the most, is Bolivia," Ettedgui said, adding that the once vibrant Jewish community of 10,000 has been reduced to about 200.

He said that the recent economic and political turmoil in the country has led to a mass exodus of the Jewish community who live in Bolivia's capital, La Paz.

"My contacts there tell me that because there are so [few] people and because there is basically no funding available to them for formal or even informal Jewish education... young people are assimilating and not showing up to the Jewish community centre for programming."

Ettedgui said that when he met with the board members of the Circulo Israelita, the Bolivian Jewish organization, they were initially seeking funding for Jewish education.

Yaldeinu founder Michael Ettedgui, second from the left, met with board members of the Jewish community organization in La Paz, Bolivia in October.

"They had an after-school program called Shorashim. It was a parochial school for the children of the community and... the program was taught by volunteer teachers. But because of a lack of interest, the kids aren't showing up to the program anymore and the parents aren't pushing them to go," Ettedgui said.

"We shifted course and I told them about the camping initiative and that was something they were really excited about, because it is fun and the kids will get much more out of it in terms of the experiential learning."

The camping initiative is a program that raises funds to bring a group of youths from a Diaspora Jewish community – in this case, Bolivia – to spend three weeks at a Canadian Jewish summer camp.

"To bring these children to summer camp here in Canada, I believe, will lead to a Jewish revival within that community. Rather than have them show up to the community centre, and sit down for a lesson being led by volunteer parents in the community, if I can bring them here for three weeks and put them in a Zionist summer camp atmosphere, they'll go back revitalized and more excited about being Jewish," Ettedgui said.

He said he wants to bring six campers between the ages of 13 and 15 and one counsellor from the community to Camp Gesher, which is three hours from Toronto, near Cloyne, Ont.

He is also working on bringing two counsellors in their early 20s from the Jewish community in Cuba, as well as children from the Israeli city of Sderot.

To raise money for this initiative, Ettedgui called on Hillel of Greater Toronto and Birthright Israel alumni to put together a Purim party on March 9 at Tattoo Rock Parlor in Toronto, with the proceeds from the event going toward this campaign.

In addition to the party, Ettedgui is also working with Hillel to help launch Morrow's Voice, a student journal that will be distributed on university campuses across the country.

The journal, which will bring in funds by selling ad space, will consist of essays and poetry that tackle three issues: Holocaust education after survivors pass on, Israel advocacy on campus and the impact of social trends on Judaism.

Submissions, due by April 15, will be vetted by an advisory council that includes the University of Toronto's Jewish Studies director Hindy Najman, U of T Professor Andrea Most and York University Professor Martin Lockshin.

Students with the best submissions will be awarded prizes, including a full-year academic scholarship at the Rothberg International School of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a trip to Israel donated by El Al Canada.

Ettedgui said he is also working with Hillel to organize a summer program that would bring a group of four students to La Paz to do volunteer work. Students would be housed in the homes of Jewish families in La Paz for three weeks in the summer, during which they would volunteer in orphanages, hospitals and schools.

For more information about the camping initiative, visit www.yaldeinu.org/bolivia.

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Canada

Russian shopkeeper hit by vandalism

A swastika, the number 88 – a play on numbers in which 8 substitutes for its related letter in the alphabet, so "88" means "HH" or "Heil Hitler" – and the letters "WP," for "White Power," were spray-painted on Alexander Shapurko's store windows this month. [Alexander Shapurko photo]

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Police are investigating after Alexander Shapurko, a Russian immigrant and shopkeeper, had his store vandalized multiple times over the past month and targeted with anti-Semitic graffiti.

His shop, which specializes in selling Soviet-era collectibles and doubles as his home in back, is located on Oakwood Avenue at Vaughan Road.

In multiple incidents in February, vandals burned a Russian flag on the side of his store, broke his windows and spray-painted swastikas and other neo-Nazi insignias on his building.

Shapurko, who is not Jewish, told The CJN last week he was increasingly afraid for his safety, and that he took pains to scrub off the offending markings in order not to upset his Jewish customers.

After police were called in to investigate, they advised him to install a security system.

Shapurko said that he has since installed two video cameras and a sound recording device in his store, both for his own protection and to help police gather "proof" if there are more attacks.

He described the vandals as caucasian men in their late teens or early twenties, all of whom, when confronted by Shapurko during one attack, shouted, "Heil Hitler" and, "We hate Russians, we hate Jews."

Shapurko said the last act of vandalism, which occurred in the early morning of Feb. 16, involved one of the vandals urinating on his shop door. He said neighbours called police, who questioned the men and obtained their names, but did not arrest them on site.

As of last Friday, detectives from Toronto Police Services 13 Division were still investigating the matter, he said.

Calls by The CJN to 13 Division were not returned by deadline.

"I hope this story helps shed light on these people," he said. "Because this is not the way we should be in society."

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YIDDISH CORNER
Edited by: ALEK SILVER
ייִדיש־ווינקל
רעדאַגירט פֿן: אַלעק סילווער

א. מ. קליין — צו זיין הונדערטסטן געבוירן־יאָר

פֿון שמחה סימכאָוויטש (סאַראַנסק)
(סוף פֿון פֿריערדיקן „ווינקל")

אויף דעם האָט א. מ. קליין געענטפֿערט: „צו פֿאַר־אייניקן עלעמענטן פֿון צוויי באַזונדערע קולטורן זעט מיר ניט אויס צו זיין אומממעגלעך". ווי א ראיה האָט ער געברענגט דעם תלמוד, געשריבן הונדערטזעכלעך אין אַראַמעיש, אַדער דעם רמב"ם „מורה נבוכים" געשאַפֿן אין אַראַביש. קליין איז געווען שטאָלץ מיט זיין ייִדי־שער ירושה און ער האָט שארף קריטיקירט די ייִדיש־ענגלישע שרייבער פֿון זיין צייט, וואָס מיינען, אַז דורך זיין וואָג וויניקער ייִדיש ווערלט זיי זיין מער אַמעריקא־ניש. אָט די פֿאַרנייגונג פֿון זייער אייגענער קולטור־ירושה, מיינט קליין, ערמוטיגט זיי צו ווערן צוויי־ראַנגיקע שאָפּער.

די נעטריישאָפט פֿון א. מ. קליין צום ייִדישן פֿאָלק קומט בולט צום אויסדרוק אין זיין לידער־זאַמלונג „די היטלעריאַדע", אין וועלכער ער באשרייבט די לידער אין דאָס מאָדערנדטע פֿון ייִדן אין חיטשע נעגל פֿון היטלער־דייטשלאַנד. דאָ שטייגט זיין לידּ אין אַ דיא־פֿאַזאָן פֿון צער און צאָרן קנגן די ייִדן־פֿיינקער פֿון אַלע צייטן, ווי אין לידּ „בּיי די טייכן פֿון בבל", וווּ ער רעכנט אויס אַלע טייכן, וואָס האָבן פֿארנומען ייִדישע טערערן. די צוגרייבנדנקייט צום ייִדישן פֿאָלק קומט אויך בולט אויס אין דעם אייניקן ראַמאַן, „די צווייטע מגילה", וואָס קליין האָט פֿאַרעפֿנטלעכט אין 1948. דאָ שילדערט קליין די טראַגיסאָמאַציע פֿון אַ מאָדערנעם ייִדישן אינטעלעקטואַל, אַ גערָאטעוועטער פֿון חורבן, וואָס געפֿינט זיין תּיקון אין זין מקום־מיקלט אין דער נייַ־אָנטשטאַנענער מדינת ישׂראל.

אין דער זעלבער צייט איז א. מ. קליין געווען אַן אַלגעמיין־קאָנסידערער פֿאָטאָ. אין די דרייסיקער יאָרן האָט ער געשריבן וועגן דער אַרבעטסלאָזיקייט אין אָנ־דערע פֿאַציאַלע פֿראָגן. אין 1948 האָט ער פֿאַרעפֿנט־לעכט „די וויכשטול און אַנדערע לידער", וואָס זיינען כּמעט אין גאַנצן געווידמעט דער פֿראַבלעמאַטיק־קויבע־קער סביבה און לעבנסשטייגער. די קויבעקער פֿרא־גיזיק זיינען קליינע געווען נאָענט מחמת זיי האָבן אים דערמאָנט זיין ייִדישע געמיינשאפֿט, וואָס ראַנגלט זיך אויך אויפֿצוהאַלטן איר רעליגיע און קולטור.

די האַזיקע שאָפּונג האָט אים געברענט גרויס אַנערקענונג בייַ די קויבעקער פֿראַנציזין און ער איז אויך דערפֿאַר באַלויבט געווָארן מיט דער העכסטער קאַנאַדישער ליטעראַטור־אויסצייכענונג — דעם גא־וערנאָר דזשענעראַלס מעדאַל.

אברהם משה קליין האָט משפּיע געווען אויף אַ גאַנצן דור קאַנאַדער שרייבער, באַזונדערס פֿון ייִדיש אָפּשטאַם, ווי אירווינג לעיטאַן, לעאָנאַרד קאָהען, מרים וואָלדענגאָן און מרדכי ריטשלער. וועגן קליינען האָבן געשריבן די מערסטע קאַנאַדער ליטעראַטור־קריטיקער און זיינע שאָפּונגען, אין לידּ און אין פּראָזע, דערשיינען אין נייַע רעווידירטע אויסלאָגעס. ס'איז פֿאַר אים, ווייזט אויס, נישט לייכט אָבצוגעמען צו פֿאַראייניקן אין זיך גרונטיקע ייִדישקייט מיט דער אַלגעמיין־קאַנאַדער קולטור און ווערטן. פֿון אָט דעם אינערלעכן ויתרוצצו איז ער אויוס אַ בעזיונדערער, אָבער זייַן ליטעראַרישע ירושה איז געבליבן גאַנץ און אומבאַשעדיקט — אַן אינספּיראַציע פֿאר אַ מאָדערנעם ייִד און מענטש. זיינע שאָפּונגען זיינען איבערגעזעצט געוואָרן אין אַנדערע שפּראַכן און דאָרפֿן נאָך פֿאר אַ סך יאָרן בעלערנט און שטודירט ווערן פֿון די היינטצייטיקע סטודענטן אין די הויכע שטודיר־אינסטיטוציעס.

Greater Toronto Area

'Objective' reporting and Al-Jazeera

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

During the violent years of what became known as the second intifadah, CBC coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially its television news, was mainly one-sided. The CBC often depicted Israel as a callous oppressor and the Palestinians as helpless victims. This coverage, which lasted from the fall of 2000 until the spring of 2004, was directed by Tony Burman, then head of CBC News.

To every complaint about anti-Israel bias, Burman's answer was always the same: "I can assure you that our reporters and editors make every effort to be objective and even-handed in their reporting, and I believe they are."

Listening to Burman's comments on CBC Radio's The Current (Feb. 17) about his new role as managing director of Al-Jazeera English, based in Qatar, one might think he was again describing the CBC's coverage.

Burman insisted that, during the recent war in Gaza, Al-Jazeera had shown both sides of the story. Reporters filed stories about Israelis facing rocket fire in Sderot, and they accurately and dispassionately depicted events in Gaza, thus achieving fair, balanced coverage – all in keeping with western journalistic standards, he said.

However, just as Burman's claims about CBC's treatment of Israel under his watch were disingenuous, so, too, are his claims about Al-Jazeera's coverage.

When Anna Maria Tremonti, host of The Current, raised concerns that Arabic Al-Jazeera has been a conduit for anti-Semitic views, Burman denied that anything similar would happen on the English service. He played down any concerns about the Arabic service by claiming that, after all, anti-Arab views are heard in the Israeli media.

Tremonti played a clip of Bernie Farber, chief executive officer of Canadian Jewish Congress, cautioning that the CRTC must insist, as it had with the 2004 Al-Jazeera Arabic application (which was accepted with stringent conditions that cable and satellite companies felt were too onerous), that the English service would not engage in "hateful, vile rhetoric."

Farber's concern is underscored by a Feb. 7 Times of London report that British MPs criticized Al-Jazeera for broadcasting the sermons of a Muslim cleric, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, in which he celebrated the Holocaust and prayed for the killing of all Jews. However, the Times noted, "the network, which is gaining popularity in Britain through its English channel, refused to apologize for Sheikh al-Qaradawi's statements, which were broadcast on Al-Jazeera's Arabic station, saying that it could not control the words and opinions expressed during 'live' broadcasts."

On the issue of censorship, Burman conceded that, while this is a problem in the Arab world – although not with "fearless" Al-Jazeera – it's also a problem in Israel, where the government "restricts movement to keep journalists from covering all the story."

On the issue of Al-Jazeera's independence, Burman was categorical: There is a "rock-solid firewall" between the government of Qatar and Al-Jazeera English.

This came as news to Ofir Gendelman, acting director of Arab press and public affairs for Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Gendelman, who is fluent in Arabic, has been interviewed several times by both Al-Jazeera outlets.

In conversation, Gendelman pointed out: "Al-Jazeera International [the English service], like its Arabic language twin channel, is owned by the Qatari foreign minister, who also acts as prime minister, Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem. Al-Jazeera International has the same top management as Al-Jazeera, which consists of two radical Palestinians, who are close to the Muslim Brotherhood movement and influence Al-Jazeera's coverage. Although Al-Jazeera usually says that it is independent, it is not the case, as there is no single free news organization in the Arab world, Qatar included."

Gendelman continued: "Mr. Burman's claim that there's a firewall between the channel and the Qatari government is at best misleading. Everything in Al-Jazeera's broadcasting, in English and in Arabic alike, aims to serve the Qatari foreign policy and the tiny emirate's quest to play a pivotal regional and international role.

"It's true that rarely, during the Gaza operation, the channel would air a balanced report about the Israeli side, but compared to the anti-Israel slurs and pro-Palestinian propaganda it aired on a 24-7 basis, this 'balance' was pathetic and meant to serve as a fig leaf.

"While Al-Jazeera International is a mild version of the Islamic and radical Arabic Al-Jazeera, it is still the most anti-Israel, pro-Arab/Palestinian 'resistance' channel that airs in English."

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Teacher uses theatre to give kids life skills

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Gary Jury was a natural choice when Toronto's Secular Jewish Community School (formerly the Morris Winchevsky School) was modifying its curriculum and looking for someone to introduce drama into the classroom four years ago.

The 48-year-old father of four children, ranging in age from five to 19, has a background in theatre and is an experienced drama and improv teacher. A marketing consultant and writer, Jury was born and raised in Winnipeg, where he attended Jewish day school until Grade 6.

His wife, who is not Jewish, found the Winchevsky Centre – the secular Jewish community with which the school is affiliated – when they were "looking for a place for our children."

Jury was struck by the inclusivity of the community, which welcomes same-sex, interracial, interfaith and cross-cultural families,and by the spirituality he found there.

"I was looking for that spiritual sense I grew up with," he said, recalling the Orthodox synagogue built by his grandfather, which he attended as a child.

The school – affectionately referred to in Yiddish as the *Shule*, pronounced shuh-leh – offers a secular humanist outlook and teaches Jewish history, traditions and culture while integrating "a flavour of Yiddish, Hebrew and Jewishness," according to its website. The Sunday curriculum is divided into five-week modules on various subjects, and students can choose ones that interest them.

Most recently, Jury led a module on shtetl life. The theme provided his students, who ranged in age from five to 10, with the opportunity to ask their parents and grandparents about their own family backgrounds, he said. As well, it lent itself to a drama component, and students were assigned roles from *Fiddler on the Roof* to play during class.

By using theatre in the classroom, Jury also teaches life skills, he said. "It's important on stage and in life that you're listening and reacting. It's team building."

As well, he said – referring to teaching at the school in general – it's important to give students the context of Judaism and lessons about Jewish values such as tzedakah and social justice.

He encourages kids to ask questions, and he believes in imparting life skills as well as letting the students have fun.

"And if they learn something," he added, "it's not so bad."

Next year, Jury will teach another drama module and one about Jews and comic books.

Students and parents who saw his bio in the school's promotional material had a hint of what they might expect if they chose his module. Along with more conventional information – Jury studied theatre at York University and has performed professionally as an actor, singer and dancer since he was 17 – the last line of the bio notes that his favourite colour is plaid.

"When people read it, I want them to see the course is going to be fun... It lets them know there's going to be a quirky component."

A lesson from the teacher: *"If you can't be seen, you can't be heard. That's a big life lesson. In the most literal sense, we learn different ways to communicate more effectively [but] it has to do with everything... Have your voice heard."*

Gary Jury teaches his students to "extend their energy beyond their bodies" as part of an exercise at Toronto's Secular Jewish Community School.

Community channels support to students

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

As confrontations between anti-Israel and pro-Israel students at York University continue and with Israeli Apartheid Week set to take place next month, the Canadian Jewish community is uniting to deal with the intimidation and hostility that pro-Israel students feel on campuses across the country.

Howard English, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's spokesperson, said federation and the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA) along with their partner organizations – including Hillel, Canadian Jewish Congress, Hasbara Fellowships, Canadian Centre for Israel Activism and Canada Israel Committee – are supporting Jewish students in every conceivable way.

"We're supporting them financially… we're supporting them when it comes to advice on student security, we're supporting them when it comes to strategy and communications, on community mobilization, on government relations and through ongoing contact with York University administration," English said regarding a number of anti-Israel incidents at York this month.

"This year, there is an unprecedented sense of unity among student groups and Jewish organizations."

But English said that the onus is on York's administration to enforce its student code of conduct and "to rid itself of damaging destructive elements in its midst."

He said community members can e-mail York's administration to pressure it to enforce the code.

English said a donor boycott is also being considered, but "there is no point recommending a donor boycott unless you are assured of its success, because to recommend something like that and for it to fail would really harm the cause."

Meanwhile, Daniel Ferman, president of Hillel at York, said that in recent meetings with York's senior administration and security, Hillel and the school have been working on ways to make all students feel safer and comfortable on campus.

In a statement last week, York President Mamdouh Shoukri called on student leaders to act in the best interest of the school's 50,000 students. "Every student at York has the right to go about their activities free from intimidation or disruption to their academic lives. It is impossible to claim to both lead and impede students at the same time," he said.

Vice-president of students Rob Tiffin added that York will consider "the actions of individuals and clubs in the recent days and will be following the processes laid out in the Student Code of Conduct."

In reference to noisy anti-Israel demonstrations that have been held in the school's central Vari Hall rotunda – most recently on Feb. 12 – Tiffin added that last year, York "relaxed regulations on the usage of Vari Hall by student groups on an experimental basis. However, the university is once again reviewing all of its options with regard to the use of Vari Hall."

Jewish student groups are also working on advocacy initiatives for the period before, during and after Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), when IAW organizers are slated to hold events on more than 25 campuses worldwide.

"Students are working on Israel advocacy on campus – they're bringing speakers, they're working on a strong ad campaign and they're working on developing an online strategy to target students on campus," Ferman said.

English said students will be communicating positive messages about Israel's contributions to the world, and they'll have information that deals with the messages being disseminated by IAW supporters.

For example, Hillel Ottawa is currently holding its first annual Israel: A Partner Week, which began Feb. 23 and runs until Feb. 27, at Algonquin College, Carleton University and the University of Ottawa.

Les Viner, chair of CIJA's university outreach committee (UOC), said he's pleased with the collaboration of Jewish groups. "The community should know that their dollars… [are] being passed through. The students are amazing and the community is in fact coming together and getting stronger."

He said the UOC has assembled a task force, chaired by York history professor Irving Abella, to make recommendations on the best ways to counter IAW.

"Part of the plan is to empower students, to make sure that students on campus are there when things happen. They are smart and motivated, and they need to have a voice," Viner said.

He added that students will get more money and staff to help them effectively work with each other and university administrations.

"The goal is to make sure students are safe and not bullied and have an ability and opportunity to speak for Israel and allow pro-Israel speakers to speak on campus without disruption and to engage in intellectual debate, not politicized drama."

Meanwhile, more reports of incidents at York are surfacing. In one, a business student was told Feb.11 by a teaching assistant never to wear an Israel Defence Forces T-shirt to class again. Hillel has forwarded the case to York's dispute resolution centre.

In another incident last week, Jewish students reported that Jewish student groups were not invited to a rally against a petition to oust York's student council for inactivity during the recent CUPE strike at York, because the rally's organizers blamed pro-Zionist campus groups and leaders for the campaign against the student union.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Maksim Chmerkovskiy or How I left the Soviet Union and learned to love dance

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

It's a typical immigration story really.

A young boy grows up in oppressive Soviet-era Ukraine, unaware that he's Jewish but encouraged by his family to nurture a burgeoning ability to dance.

Eventually, the boy's family manages to take him and his brother to America to start a new, freer life, allowing them all to discover and express their Judaism without the threat of governmental reprisal.

Oh yes; and in the process the family unleashes upon North America one of the finest ballroom dancers the world has seen.

OK, maybe not that typical a story.

The dancer's name: Maksim (Maks) Chmerkovskiy.

Fans of the hit ABC TV show Dancing with the Stars know him by his work on the show – he first appeared in season two – as much as for his dashing looks and fancy footwork.

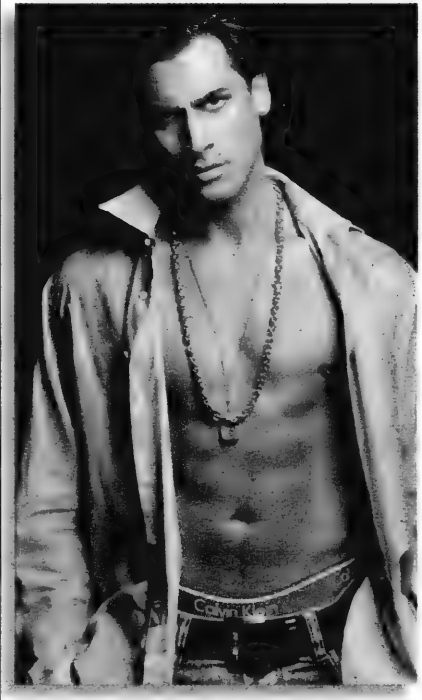
Heebonics caught up with Maks in North Carolina last month in the middle of his North American tour with the Stars, shortly after the troupe hit Toronto for their show at the Air Canada Centre.

"Toronto was fun and I used to coach up there," he said.

Maksim Chmerkovskiy

Now on his fourth tour choreographing and dancing with the company, Chmerkovskiy, 29, jokingly lamented his hectic daily schedule. "We work from 8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., then it's straight to the bus for an average six-hour ride to the next city, then it's rehearsals all day before starting the show again in the next town," he said, adding that he loves his job.

Maksim Chmerkovskiy and Laila Ali



Chmerkovskiy began dance lessons at the age of four but admitted he didn't exactly like it for a long time.

"I despised dancing lessons until I was about 13," he said. "I played other amateur sports...but when we came to America I was shy and [dancing] allowed me to socialize and make friends in the studio."

The change of scenery didn't just help him acclimatize to a new North American lifestyle, it also helped him and his brother Valentin – himself a champion ballroom dancer – discover a love for dance and the vision about how it could lead to a lifetime of fulfilment.

Chmerkovskiy told Heebonics that he's been approached numerous times to try his hand at acting as well, but so far he's been loathe to jump into the thespian's role.

"I'm good at dancing and that's what I want to do," he said, but didn't totally rule out a jump to the big or small screen as an actor saying, "If the right script comes along," he might consider it.

For now, he doesn't want to spread himself thin and insists he's managing his career and time "carefully" in the hopes of one day owning and operating his personal tour and company.

That day may not be that far off, as Chmerkovskiy the entrepreneur already owns a family-run chain of dance studios across New York and New Jersey and is a co-founder of the non-profit Dance Team USA, a charity dedicated to recruiting, supporting and training future ballroom dancers.

In reflecting on his Jewish roots, Maks recalled growing up in Ukraine in the early 1980s as a time where his family had to hide its Judaism.

"Looking back at the way I was raised, we were not raised anti-Semitic like everybody else was at that time," he said. "Every now and again, we celebrated [a holiday] that I didn't know what it was. My family now celebrates our Jewishness openly."

Once in America – the Chmerkovskiys settled in Brooklyn, N.Y. – Maks attended Brooklyn's Sinai Academy Yeshiva for a time and was interested in learning Yiddish, but said he eventually left because he wasn't getting the education he wanted to fulfil his more secular goals and aspirations in dance and sport.

Now that he's tasted success on many levels – Maks has won numerous ballroom dancing titles worldwide, including the prestigious La Classique du Québec contest in 2003 – he said there are only a couple of things he really hasn't done yet that he feels he needs to; one of these is to dance for his fans in Israel.

"I've been asked to come visit Israel and I'd love to go," he said. "To be honest, my mom is afraid of the [security] situation there, so she worries. But definitely, one day it's one of the stops for sure."

In the meantime, Chmerkovskiy will be back for his sixth go-around on season eight of Dancing with the Stars, which premières on March 9.

This season he's partnered with Hollywood actress Denise Richards and will face off against his fiancée, Karina Smirnoff – the two got engaged on New Year's Eve – and her dancing partner, Silicon Valley computer guru and philanthropist Steve Wozniak.

Asked what advice he has for children considering entering the world of competitive dance, Chmerkovskiy answered, "It's a tough road and it requires a lot of mental strength. I tell kids... it's not about doing steps, you just have to have passion. And to remember this motto, which I remind myself every day, 'If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail.'"

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Lydia Tonelli & James Jamieson are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter Annalyss Tonelli-Jamieson.

Honey Mahl and Gail Gold are thrilled to announce the marriage of their children Tammy & Corey. Lovingly remembered are their fathers, Jerry Mahl and Leonard Gold.

Mazel tov to Ida & Joe Katz on their 60th wedding anniversary, March 6. With much love, your children and grandchildren.

Happy 77th wedding anniversary Betty & Jack Cohen. You are an inspiration to all of us! Love from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Steven Erlich & Shelbey Nosak.

Mazel tov to Devy on her sixth birthday. Love from all her family and friends!

Mazel tov on the bat mitzvah of Carlie, daughter of Kellie & Robert Campol. Grandparents, Carolyn & Stan Wagman, and the late Pimmy & Bill Campol.

Mazel tov on the bar mitzvah of Daniel Ash.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

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What's New deadlines: Monday, March 2 is the deadline for the March 12 issue and Monday, March 9 is the deadline for the March 19 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Thursday, Feb. 26

FILM AND DISCUSSION

Temple Har Zion's daytime programs screens The Band's Visit. 1 p.m. Non-members $5.

LITERARY READING

Nora Gold reads from her novel, Exile, 2 p.m. at the Wychwood Library, 1431 Bathurst St.

THE SISTINE SECRETS

Rabbi Benjamin Blech lectures on "The Sistine Secrets: Michelangelo's Forbidden Messages in the Heart of the Vatican." 8 p.m. at Kehillat Shaarei Torah. 416-229-2600, ext. 5

Saturday, Feb. 28

1001 NIGHTS OF PURIM

Club Aliza and Tamar of Na'amat hold a Purim party. 7:30 p.m. at the Borochov Centre. $36, $30 in advance. 416-636-5425

Sunday, March 1

MILITARISM VS. PACIFISM

Yeshiva University Kollel Yom Rishon series concludes with **Rabbi Benjamin Blech** on "War and Peace: A Jewish View of Militarism vs. Pacifism" at Clanton Park Synagogue. Breakfast 9 a.m. Lecture 9:30 a.m. Women and men welcome. 416-783-6960

JWI DIVA DAY

Jewish Women International Canada host Diva Day on March 1, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. Includes a spa with manicures, pedicures or massage, yoga, nia, Pilates and salsa, presentations by cookbook author **Rose Reisman**, work-life balance expert **Rosalie Moscoe** and style tips from **Marla Szellos**. Breakfast, lunch, espresso and smoothie bars. $125. Pre-registration required. www.divaday.ca

PLAY: SILK STOCKINGS

Join Beth Emeth Synagogue for **Cole Porter**'s Silk Stockings at Fairview Library Theatre. Show and transportation, $35. 1:15 p.m. Preregistration required, 416-633-3838.

THE WHOLE MEGILLAH

Associated Hebrew Schools Richmond Hill host a pre-Purim fun for children 2-6 years and their parents with live music, activities, crafts, storyteller, fun with computers and SMARTboards, loot bags and info about Associated. 3:30-5 p.m. at 10815 Bathurst St. Free. Pre-register, 905-889-3998, ext. 337, or pgreenspan@ahschools.com.

JEWISH HEALING SERVICE

The Jewish Healing Program of Jewish Family and Child offers a healing service with **Rabbi Reuven Tradburks** and **Yehudit Judy Shier Weisberg**. 3-4 p.m. at Kehillat Shaarei Torah. Wheelchair access. 416-638-7800, ext. 287

HISTORICAL OR LEGENDS?

Shaar Shalom Synagogue presents **Prof. Maynard Maidman**, of York University, on "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: Historical or Legendary Figures?" 7:30 p.m. 905-889-4975 or www.shaarshalom.ca

MIX AND MINGLE

Shaar Shalom Singles 45+ hosts a Mix and Mingles Evening accompanied by DJ **Dave Jones**. 7:30 p.m. $10, **David**, 416-224-9494.

Monday, March 2

CLUB SIMCHA

Chai Tikvah Foundation presents Club Simcha every Monday, 12-2 p.m., a drop-in group for adults with mental health challenges. 4700 Bathurst St. 905-886-6520

DAVENING SKILLS

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation skills series continues with **Cantor Avraham Sultan** teaching "Minchah/Ma'ariv." 7 p.m. 416-789-3213, ext. 202

Continued on page 23

War & Peace

A Jewish View Of Militarism vs. Pacifism

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What's New

Continued from page 22

Tuesday, March 3

ISRAELI CINEMA SERIES

Hebrew University, the Canadian Centre for Israel Activism, the Speakers Action group and Hillel of Greater Toronto present "Contemporary Israeli Cinema, Beyond the Conflict: Common Hopes and Dreams." Tonight, Nina's Tragedies, with an introduction by **Gillian Helfield**. 7:30 p.m. at Al Green Theatre. Tickets, 416-485-8000.

Wednesday, March 4

SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School hosts an open house for those interested in senior kindergarten to Grade 8. 10 a.m. Miles Nadal JCC. RSVP, 416-928-3537.

Other News

THE DYBBUK

Teatron Theatre presents The Dybbuk, starring **Howard Jerome**, through March 8, at the Leah Posluns Theatre. $22-$44, 416-781-5527 or www.teatrontheatre.com

MEKOROT COURSES

Mekorot offers three new courses "Prayer: A Careful Reading of the Amidah" with **Devorah Vale**. Tuesdays through March 24, 1:15-2:30 p.m., 57 Heatherton Way. "Revisiting Shabbat" explores the positive aspects of Shabbat, with **Rifka Sonenberg**. Mondays, March 2-23, 9:45-11 a.m., 14 Redmount Rd. And "Chassidic Classics" **Rabbi Michael Skobac**. Thursdays, March 5-26, 9:45-11 a.m. at Ulpanat Orot School, 45 Canyon Ave. www.mekorot.ca or 416-877-2050

FEMICIDE IN THE CONGO

Women's College Hospital presents **Eve Ensler** on "Creating a Women's Revolution" a first-hand account of mass rape and femicide in the Congo, for International Women's Day, Thursday, March 5, 7 p.m. 101 College St. Tickets, www.uofttix.ca or 416-979-8849.

MUSICAL EVENING

Congregation Bnai Torah presents an evening of light classical music featuring **Daniel** and **Carey Domb** on cello and guitar respectively. Saturday, March 7, 8 p.m. $12 in advance, $15 at the door. Reserve, 416-226-3700.

COMEDY NIGHT AT KST

Enjoy **Marc Weiner**'s comedy Child of Assimilated Jews. Weiner began learning about Judaism while performing across the United States. His routines incorporate the confusion and uncertainty he encountered in the process of becoming an Orthodox Jew. Saturday, March 7, 8:30 p.m. at Kehillat Shaarei Torah Synagogue. $36. Reserve, 416-229-2600, ext. 3.

PURIM CELEBRATIONS

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism present an evening with the subversive clown duo, Pox and Vensetta, **Patricia Rockman** and **Elaine Smooker**. Saturday, March 7, 7:30 p.m. $15. 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org

Shaar Shalom Congregation celebrates Purim with a carnival. Sunday, March 8, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. youth@shaarshalom.ca or 905-886-4975

Beth Torah Congregation hosts a Purim carnival. Sunday, March 8, noon. Admission is one food item for the kosher food bank. All adults and children in costume receive a free raffle ticket. 416-782-4495, ext. 41

WOMEN CELEBRATED

Na'amat Canada commemorate International Women's Day with "An Afternoon Tea with Women Who Inspire Us," a panel of **Rachael Turkienicz**, of York University, **Fran Saltzman**, of the RCMP, and **Erin Shapero**, Markham councillor, discussing "Women, Past, Present and Future." Sunday, March 8, 1 p.m. at the Borochov Cultural Centre. Tickets, 416-636-5425 or e-mail naamat@bellnet.ca.

HORROR & HEROISM

Jewish Theological Seminary presents an afternoon of study on Haman, Horror and Heroism. **Rabbi David Hoffman** on "Jewish Survival: How Scared Should We Be?" and **Amy Kalmanofsky** on "Queen Esther: Fantasy or Nightmare?" Sunday, March 8, 2-4 p.m. at Beth David Synagogue, Free. 416-633-5500

RETAINING MEMORY

Baycrest Centre presents "Beat Memory Loss with Technology," with psychologist **Brian Richards**. On how electronic memory aids and other technologies can help people as they age. Monday, March 9, 1:30- 3 p.m. Register, 416-785-2500, ext. 3374, or lkamenitz@baycrest.org.

TASTING WITH CHEF MAROM

Enjoy "An Evening of Taste with Chef Eran Marom," Passover delicacies and wines, and support the Toronto Partnership Minyan. Thursday, March 19, 7:30 p.m. Reserve by March 12. E-mail torontopartnershipminyan@gmail.com.

VOLUNTEER IN ISRAEL

The Israel Volunteer Program Centre is offering an array of volunteering options in Israel with Magen David Adom, Israeli-army-style programs, an opportunity to volunteer in Eilat and more. Start as early as May 2009. Acceptance criteria, cost and dates vary. Info, Israel Volunteer Program Centre, ipcto@jafi.org or 416-638-8824.

HU: CALL FOR PAPERS

Hebrew University hosts an international conference for research on Hebrew language and methods of teaching Hebrew as a second language, July 27-28, in Jerusalem. Proposals for lectures, workshops or posters must be submitted by March 1. http://overseas.huji.ac.il

EATING DISORDERS SUPPORT

Eating Disorders of York Region provides services, education, support for families and friends of individuals who are affected by eating disorders. Free programs Monday-Thursday each week. 905-886-6632 or visit www.edoyr.com

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child Service. 4600 Bathurst St. Information/registration 416-638-7800 or www.jfandcs.com. Call **Shawna**, ext. 215, for info and registration.

High Conflict Divorce. A workshop for parents who wish to lessen the impact of divorce on their children. This workshop requires active participation and is not for individuals in abusive situations.Tuesday, March 3, 6:30-9 p.m. 4600 Bathurst St.

Surviving Divorce: Avoiding Financial Disaster – a workshop exploring the common financial mistakes made in divorce and how to avoid them. Wednesday, March 4, 7-8:30 p.m. at 4600 Bathurst St. Free. Registration required, ext. 215.

Life Skills For Today's Woman: A six-session group for women who want to make a change in their lives. Discuss time and stress management, building self-esteem, assertiveness and improving communication skills. Begins Thursday, March 5, 7-9 p.m. at 4600 Bathurst St.

When You're About to Separate: What to Tell The Kids – a workshop for parents about to separate or in the early stages of separation on how to best meet your child's needs. Tuesday, March 10, 9:30 a.m.-noon at the Promenade Mall, #313.

Adolescents and Divorce: A workshop for parents who are going through a separation or divorce and who want info about helping their adolescent children cope with the situation. Wednesday, March 11, 7-9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Bldg.

FOR SENIORS

Temple Har Zion's Daytime Programs screens The Band's Visit. **Rabbi Cory Weiss** leads the discussion following the film. Thursday, Feb. 26 1 p.m. Non-members $5.

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC: Purim musical celebration, Thursday, March 5, 1:15 p.m. Pre-register by March 1, 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Beth Tzedec Congregation Haverim Program offers "A Showcase of Moving Scenes" with Act II Studio. Monday, March 2, 1:30 p.m. $3. 416-781-3511

Beth Tikvah Friendship Group's Purim Party takes place Thursday, March 12, 2-4 p.m. dance and sing with Rita and Max. $10. Reservations, 416-221-3433.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Casino Rama, Wednesday, March 11.; Movie Day, Thursday, March. 19, 1:30 p.m. All welcome. Call Tuesday-Thursday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112

Bingo Bonanza, a fundraiser for National Council of Jewish Women Passover Food Drive, Wednesday, March 4, 1-2:30 p.m. $10.

"Women in the Bible: Queen Esther," a lecture with **Loretta Tanenbaum**. Tuesday, March 3, 10-11:30 a.m. $3, non-members $6.

Wellness Clinic, "Diabetes Education and Counselling," Tuesday, March 3, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Call 416-787-1676, ext. 301, for appointment.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca

Register now for "Break Camps," March Break Camp, March 16-20 and Passover Break Camp, April 6-17. Ext. 378 or centrecamp@bjcc.ca.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org

Sundays on Bloor Film Talk with **Shlomo Schwartzberg**: "International Jewish Cinema: Australia, Norway and other Countries." Sunday, March 1, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. $9, includes a light breakfast. Register, ext. 0.

Annual MNjcc Purim carnival. Great prizes, costume contests, carnival booths galore, mishloach manot packages. Sunday, March 8, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. $5, $10 per family at the door. Info, ext. 154.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 17

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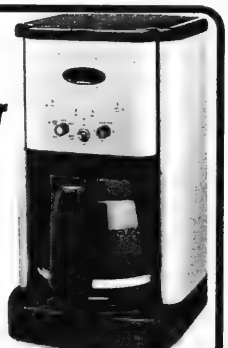

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

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Burton Glenns	Feb 6/09	7027 Clover Rd
Ralph Milrod	Feb 3/09	Dub Nob 20, Entrance
Anne Knopman	Feb 7/09	3560 Bathurst St
Zygmunt Niedzwiecki	Feb 7/09	5935 Bathurst St
Irving Swartz	Feb 9/09	36 Glenarden Rd
Barry Spiegel	Feb 9/09	47 Woodside Ave
Roey Turner	Feb 8/09	5400 Steeles Ave W
Florence Bennett	Feb 8/09	3560 Bathurst St
Sarah Ita Goldlist	Feb 10/09	61 Waterloo Ave
David Litvack	Feb 11/09	64 Robingrove Rd
Hillary Firestone	Feb 10/09	37 Sparkhall Ave
Aaron Hermant	Feb 12/09	3000 Bathurst St
Sam Bielas	Feb 14/09	343 Clark Ave
Walter Orless	Feb 13/09	2550 Pharmacy Ave
Arnold Urbas	Feb 14/09	10 Torresdale Ave
Joseph Heiferling	Feb 12/09	596 York Hill Blvd

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Gutnik, Fania	Feb. 7/09	5400 Steeles Ave. W
Seguin,Tutzi Bertha	Feb. 6/09	
Silberstein, Aaron	Feb. 7/09	7420 Bathurst St
Waldman, Billie	Feb. 7/09	100 Promenade Cir
Goldstein, Sylvia	Feb. 7/09	Private
Lewis, Eric	Feb. 8/09	555 Markham St
Zukerman, Abram	Feb. 8/09	2 Neptune Dr
Grauman, Gitl	Feb. 9/09	35 Cedarcroft Blvd
Goodman, Kate	Feb. 9/09	81 Castlefield Ave
Tishcoff, Harry	Feb. 9/09	17 Cadillac Ave
Levy-Bencheton, Isaac	Feb. 12/09	6 Forest Laneway
Hart, John Isaac	Feb. 12/09	100 Upper Madison Ave
Pupko, Samuel	Feb. 9/09	15 Terrydale Dr
Porter, Murray	Feb. 7/09	

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Budget cuts force aliyah centre to close

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The global economy, drastic cuts to the Jewish Agency for Israel's (JAFI) budget and the online age converged last month to force the closure of the Montreal Aliyah Centre, one of several in North America slated to shut down by the summer as part of a "major restructuring" within JAFI.

But although the move – effective at the end of January – was to some extent anticipated, it came as a sad blow to those associated with the centre, which was almost as old as the State of Israel itself. They now fear that the absence of people "on the ground" could hurt the level of aliyah from Montreal.

"For 60 years, there was an aliyah presence here," said Arlazar Eliashiv, president of the Canadian Zionist Federation's eastern region. "The decision was based on the size of the community. I'm very disappointed."

Even Israel's consul general in Montreal, Yoram Elron, called the closure "unfortunate," necessitated as it was by cost-cutting demands within JAFI.

In contrast, while in general regretting the closure of the Montreal centre, JAFI people outside Montreal, as well as officials from Nefesh B'Nefesh, the seven-year-old U.S.-based organization that provides aliyah services and financial support for virtually all North American olim, saw the move as a positive development overall.

The Jewish Agency will, both online and through its emissaries, continue to accept applications, maintain the sole right to determine eligibility for aliyah under Israel's Law of Return and work with Nefesh B'Nefesh on immigrant processing. The idea, both JAFI and Nefesh B'Nefesh officials said, is to eliminate overlapping functions while consolidating existing ones and bringing the aliyah process more into the modern age, in which initial applications are only computer keystrokes away.

Jewish groups condemn CUPE motion

Continued from page 1

In response to CUPE's distinction between boycotting Israeli universities but not the academics who work at those universities, Goldberg asked, "How do you boycott institutions without boycotting individuals in the process?"

Len Rudner, CJC Ontario regional director, said he doesn't believe the vote represents the will of the majority of university workers in Ontario any more than Resolution 50 – which pushes for a boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign "to end Israel's apartheid practices" – represented the will of CUPE Ontario workers generally when it was passed about two years ago.

B'nai Brith Canada also released a statement that labelled the union's latest resolution as "discriminatory and racist."

B'nai Brith Canada's executive vice-president Frank Dimant said the motion "marginalizes its supporters here at home and disenfranchises CUPE members who are supportive of democratic Israel and its right to defend its citizens against terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah."

Dimant added that those who voted in favour of the motion "are promoting hatred and advancing a discriminatory agenda that is at odds with Canadian values of tolerance, respect and human rights for all.

"We urge the wider CUPE membership to come forward to denounce this resolution and call on the Canadian public to do the same."

Tyler Shipley, spokesperson for CUPE local 3903 at York University, which represents contract faculty and teaching assistants, told the Toronto Star that his local will be pushing York to sever its financial ties to Israel.

His local will also back Israeli Apartheid Week, which is scheduled to begin next week.

Bialik founder also recalled for love of art

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Victor Topper was a renaissance man who combined his expertise in business and art when he and his wife, Renee, opened Topper Gallery, specializing in Asian and ethnic art, some 15 years ago after he closed the fur business his father had established a generation earlier.

Obituary

An amateur photographer, family man, Yiddishist, nature and music lover – with eclectic taste ranging from classical to liturgical, jazz, folk and pop – Topper was a founder of Bialik Hebrew Day School and served as chair of United Jewish Appeal's fur trade division. A former president of the Fur Council of Canada, he was a State of Israel Bonds honoree in 1983, and served on the boards of the Jewish Public Library and Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Topper died Jan. 21 at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, following a year-long illness. He was 77.

Earlier this month, Beth Tzedec dedicated its Shabbat Shirah weekend in his memory.

Topper's interest in art was sparked on his honeymoon in 1954, when an older couple – an Asian art expert and his wife – befriended Topper and his bride, and bought them an ivory carving as a gift.

A native of Toronto who attended Forest Hill Collegiate, Topper received his BA from Carleton College (now Carleton University) in Ottawa, where he also played pro football for the Ottawa Rough Riders.

He spent much of his childhood first in a Catholic children's centre, then in a series of Jewish foster homes and living with relatives – sometimes sleeping three-in-a-bed, head-to-foot, with his cousins – because his mother had contracted tuberculosis when he was about four years old, and was unable to care for him for a period of time that lasted more than six years, Renee told The CJN.

Topper, whose first language was Yiddish – his parents having immigrated from Russia – "felt there was a need for a school in Toronto that would teach Yiddish," Renee said. Their oldest daughter, Lori Chadwick, was in Bialik's first kindergarten class.

During his years at Reliable Fur Dressers and Dyers, Topper travelled extensively for business, seeking out galleries wherever he went.

The couple ran two art shows at Beth Tzedec, and Victor often lectured about art at museums, galleries and service groups while he was still working in the fur business.

In a eulogy at Topper's funeral, Beth Tzedec's Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl referred to him as "a kind and generous man, a man of integrity, a mensch."

He and Renee brought diverse interests to the synagogue and sponsored many programs there, the rabbi told The CJN. He will be "deeply missed" by the congregational community, Rabbi Frydman-Kohl added.

Topper leaves Renee, his wife of 54 years; children Lori Chadwick, David, Randi Saks of St. Catharines and Sari Romberg of Phoenix; and 12 grandchildren.

Coast to Coast

Guelph shul warms to new spiritual leader

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The 100-year-old Guelph Jewish community has welcomed Cantor Avraham Fisher as its new spiritual leader of the Beth Isaiah Synagogue.

Barbara Brown, a member of the synagogue's board of directors, said that she is very excited to have Fisher and his wife, Techiya, become a part of the shul, which has been at the centre of a vibrant Jewish community in Guelph, Ont., for 60 years.

She said that while the Guelph Hebrew Congregation came into being around 1907, the first building for the congregation was erected in 1925 at the corner of Dublin and Surrey streets. The current synagogue, named Beth Isaiah, was built in 1949 at the same location.

"The synagogue was named after the son of one of the founding families, Sydney Isaiah Acker, who died while serving in the [Royal Canadian Air Force] during World War II," Brown said.

Cantor Avraham Fisher

Currently, Beth Isaiah, which has a membership of nearly 50 families, is home for Fisher, who has ambitions to have the synagogue live up to the three Hebrew descriptions attributed to it.

"One is of course, beit tfillah, a house of prayer. It's important to pray together so we feel that we are a community and not just an individual," Fisher said.

"The second one is a beit midrash, a place of study. It is a place where we read the Torah and we discuss things, a place where we can study together.

"And the third is beit knesset, where we gather for social activities and sometimes where we give support to people who are dealing with loss, a funeral, a memorial, and so forth."

Born in Hungary and educated in Israeli yeshivas, Fisher also obtained degrees in psychology from Bar Ilan University and in Tanach and Jewish history from Hebrew University.

He used his degrees to teach at various schools in Israel. In 1974, he was sent to Montreal as a shaliach and taught at Herzliah High School.

While in Montreal, Fisher obtained a master's degree in Jewish studies from Concordia University.

In 1982, Fisher moved to Toronto, where he taught at what is now called the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto.

Fisher said that during his second and third year teaching at Tanenbaum CHAT, he worked on fulfilling his dream of become a cantor and began studying with cantors and rabbis to hone his skills.

During that time, he also became spiritual leader of Beth Israel Synagogue in Peterborough, Ont. – commuting back and forth from the shul to Toronto – and by 1985, he landed a job as cantor and principal of the religious school at Beth Jacob Synagogue in Kitchener, Ont.

He stayed there until 1994, when he moved back to Israel, but he continued to serve Beth Jacob as cantor during the High Holidays and Sukkot.

He said that he and his wife decided to move back to Toronto after his wife was offered a job here. Soon after, Fisher learned of an opening for a spiritual leader at Beth Isaiah, and he has been working with the Jewish community in Guelph since last September.

He said that although his wife is in Toronto, he chose to live in Guelph to be near the shul, because he doesn't believe in serving a community by commuting back and forth.

"It can be done, but not properly," he said, adding that he makes frequent trips to Toronto, and his wife travels to Guelph.

Fisher said he always keeps his home open to the general community, as well as to university students and visitors seeking a family Shabbat experience. He also offers regular kiddush services, organizes social events and reaches out to youths in the community through Torah education.

He said he also plans to start an adult education program, and he currently offers a class on the role of women in prayer.

"Women can be more involved in prayer... I want to empower people who want to know if halachically it can be done, and they will be surprised that there is a lot that can be," Fisher said.

Brown said she's excited to have the Fishers join the Guelph Jewish community.

"They're enthusiastic and have plans for interesting education and social programs, and plan to make some changes to our services to make them more participatory," Brown said.

Fisher said the diversity of the Guelph Jewish community is what makes him excited to work at the synagogue.

"I have people that call themselves cultural Jews, and on the other end, you have people who are very committed in terms of observance, keeping kashrut and Shabbat. That's the exciting thing about it, that we try to cater to everyone so they feel like they're being enriched by the community and that their needs are being met," Fisher said.

Miles Nadal JCC

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Members will be held at 750 Spadina Avenue in Room 218, on the 30th day of March, 2009 at 8:00 o'clock in the evening to:

a) Accept as Members of the Corporation those Members listed in good standing tabled and delivered by the Secretary of the Corporation;
b) Elect its Directors;
c) Approve the Financial Statements for the Corporation for the year ended August 31, 2008;
d) Appoint auditors and authorize the Directors to fix their remuneration
e) Ratify and approve all the acts, proceedings, transactions, commitments, contracts entered into, and undertakings given by or on behalf of the Corporation by the Board of Directors from the date of the last Annual General Meeting to the date hereof;
f) Transact such further and other business as may be properly brought before the meeting or any adjournments thereof.

Members of the Corporation may be nominated by written petition signed by not less than twenty-five (25) persons, who are members and eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting. The petitions must be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee and must be received by the Chairman of the Nominations Committee at least fifteen (15) days prior to the Annual Meeting, after which time no further nominations shall be accepted.

Proxy forms for those unable to attend the meeting may be obtained from the Business Office of the Corporation during business hours.

DATED the 26th day of February, 2009
BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
"Jodi Shanoff"
Secretary

UJA Federation

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חדשה בקנדה

נינה שנהב

"אני לא הייתי שואל." טוען מאיר. "אבל למה? היא מנויה, הוא פנוי, מה רע בקצת שידך?" מאיר מושך בכתפיו. "לא כולם משוגעים על בליינד-דייטס כמוך..." אני מתבוננת בו בריכוז. "להזכירך, גם אתה השתתפת בבליינד- דייט פעם אחת, ואפילו התחתנת איתה." (בעתיד אני גם אספר לכם על הפגישה הכאילו עיוורת שלנו). בנגד הטיעון הזה אין לו תגובה, וכך יצא שאני מתקשרת לגלית, ידידתי הנרושה ומציעה לה לבוא לדיבר. אגב כך, אני מוסיפה בהיסוס שגם ידיד של מאיר, צחי שמו, מגיע לאדווחה. גלית שותקת לרגע, ואז: "תגידי, את מארגנת לי איזה בליינד-דייט, או משהו?" היא שואלת. "לא!" אני קוראת בתמימות.

"כי אני אוהבת בליינד-דייטס!" מוסיפה גלית, ואנחנו סוגרות על שעה של חקירות בחיק.

"הייתי חייב להגיד לצחי שאנחנו מסדרים לו מישהי." מתלונן מאיר. "מה הוא שאל עליה?" אני מסתקרנת. "את יודעת, אם היא חתיכה, אם יש לה חזה גדול, אם היא בלונדינית." לפני שאני מקיאה מהקלישאות, אני מסיימת את השיחה בטון צדקני: "חס וחלילה שישאל אם היא אינטליגנטית, או במה היא עוסקת." (אני כמובן לא מגלה לו שגלית שאלה אם צחי גבוה, עשיר, או שלא נדע, קירח).

בשעה היעודה אנחנו מתיישבים אל השולחן, טוענים ממטעמי מאיר (גם את זה תגלו בהמשך: לבשל - אני לא יודעת), ומנסים לשוחח בקלילות. נראה שגלית מפרגנת לצחי, שואלת שאלות הרות גורל על תכונותיו המלבבות, ובכלל, מתעניינת. צחי? ובכן פה זה יותר מסובך. כישראלי שורשי (ממש כמו גלית) הוא די פלא חשיבות עצמית, ונראה מאוכזב בעליל (לגלית רעמת שיער כהה, והיא לא הייתה מנצחת את פמלה במירוץ החזייה). הוא עונה לה לקונית, ונראה משתעמם. כשאנחנו עוברים אותם לרגע בסלון ופושים קפה, מאיר לוחש שזה לא הולך. כאילו שלא ידעתי.

אגב, צחי יכול בקלות לספור את השיערות שעל ראשו, והכרס שלו בהחלט לא מבוישת נגרת בחודש שישי (וידוי: אני אישית, מאוד אוהבת גברים עם כרס שמנמנת, אבל זה לא מרשים את מאיר שנתון בדיאטה כרונית).

כולנו נפרדים אחרי הקפה הראשון.

"לא מצאתי חן בעיניו." קובעת גלית בטלפון למחרת, ולי קשה להכחיש. "גם הוא סתם נפוח, מלא בעצמו ולא שווה הרבה." היא ממשיכה.

כעבור כשבוע, יוצא לנו להכיר את סטיבן, גרוש קנדי חמוד, שמגלה עניין בהיכרות עם ישראלית. גלית מייד נכנסת לתמונה, אחרי שליקקה שלוש דקות את מצעי ההדחייה מצחי. בתום חקירה מתבקשת (משני הצדדים), אנו שוב מתייצבים בחדר האוכל הביתי לבליינד-דייט נוסף.

נראה בעליל שסטיבן נדלק על גלית שלנו. הוא ממלא לה את כוס היין ללא הרף, מתעניין בחייה, בעיסוקיה, ומחמיא לה על חיוכה הקורן (מאוד, באותו ערב). בשלב הכנת הקפה, מאיר ואני מדשנים מעונג במטבח. עוד נקודת זכות עבורינו בעולם הבא.

אנו נפרדים לאחר הקפה השלישי, בעוד מספרה של גלית טמון לבטח בסלולארי של סטיבן.

"ניראה לי שמאוד מצאתי חן בעיניו." קובעת גלית בטלפון למחרת, ולי קל מאוד שלא להכחיש. "כזה ג'נטלמן, וחמוד נורא. אבירי ועדין. מן הסתם, הוא יתקשר אלי היום-מחר."

היום-מחר סטיבן לא מתקשר, וגם לא אחרי שבוע. אחרי שאני מאיימת על מאיר בגירושין, הוא ניאות להתקשר אל סטיבן ולשאול מה קורה (אולי הבן אדם חלה במחלה נדירה, או חלילה, נפגע בתאונה?).

מאיר מניח את האפרכסת ומודה: "הוא אמר שהיא ממש לא הטיפוס שלו." (תן לי לנחש: לא מסתובבת עם מי חמצן על הראש, ולא מחליפה על בסיס קבוע חזיות עם פמלה).

בלית ברירה, אני מוסרת לגלית את העובדה המעצרת. גלית עצובה. אני מנסה לעודד אותה: "לפחות בילית ערב נחמד. לא כמו עם הצחי ההוא, שהיה מגעיל אלייך כל הערב. מאיר ואני נמצא לך עוד קנדי יהודי חמוד." גלית נזעקת, "לא! רק ישראלי. ישראלים לא מבלבלים אותי. הגברים הקנדים כל כך נימוסיים ומקסימים אלייך, ואז מסתבר שבכלל לא בא להם עלייך. עם ישראלים, לפחות את יודעת תמיד איפה את עומדת."

אגב, לא כל כך מדויק. אחרי כשבועיים, צחי פתאום התקשר אליה. הם נפגשו מאז כבר פעמיים...

לתגובות באנגלית או בעברית: nina.shenhav@gmail.com

Quebec carnival says no offence intended by stereotype

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The manager of the Quebec City winter carnival has told Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) that no offence was intended by the inclusion of a snow sculpture depicting a stereotypical Jew, and the organization has accepted the explanation.

In a Feb. 16 letter to CJC, Quebec region president Victor Goldbloom, Jean Pelletier said that carnival organizers had no intention of causing offence and they will be more vigilant in the future.

The sculpture was created by Ukrainian Pitro Romaniuk as part of a series of works said to represent different figures in his country's traditional celebration of Christmas.

Visitor Jake Burack, a McGill University professor, had complained on Feb. 11 that the figure of a hook-nosed, bearded man in a kippah clutching a bag of money was reminiscent of the negative depictions of Jews in Europe before World War II.

The sculpture was on view for a week until the end of the carnival on Feb. 15. Organizers said the carnival drew about 400,000 visitors.

The text beside the sculpture explained that it represented "a theatrical piece that takes place in our country on Christmas night. The story's characters – the astrologer, the czar, the warrior, the Jew, Death and the goat – are divided into positive and negative heroes. They represent, in an ironic and satirical form, people's lives."

All the characters were aboard a boat "symbolizing the birth of Goodness."

Snow sculpture has hooked nose, wears a kippah

Pelletier wrote to Goldbloom that the description that was received with Romaniuk's application to create the sculpture "did not permit the selection committee to conclude this was an anti-Semitic representation. If that had been the case, the committee would never have accepted such a work."

Pelletier said organizers will try to ensure that something like this does not happen again at the carnival, which is in its 55th year.

"We are satisfied with the response," said CJC, Quebec region executive director Daniel Amar.

He spoke to Pelletier by phone for about half an hour and said that he found him to be "very open to the Jewish community," having hosted members of the Toronto Jewish community at his home while they were in Quebec learning French.

"The sculpture was a mistake. He recognizes that," Amar said. "But [the carnival organizers] were acting in good faith."

Pelletier said Burack's was the only complaint the carnival received about the sculpture. Amar said CJC received two e-mails from members of the Montreal Jewish community who were concerned about the sculpture.

However, Rabbi Reuben Poupko, a CJC national officer whose family roots are in Ukraine, takes a less benign view of this "bizarre" incident.

He found the sculpture "flagrantly offensive" and feels the carnival organizers should have removed it as soon as it was brought to their attention.

He thinks that the appearance of the word "Jew" in the sculptor's application should have raised a red flag in the first place, and if it did not, the completed sculpture should have been plainly unacceptable in 2009.

"Also, I find it incredible that 400,000 people visited the carnival and no one said anything [besides Burack]."

CIC's help sought to get info on Israel

Continued from page 3

Jacob Peretz, the man who first brought the lecture series idea to the committee, said he felt it was vital to start with a speaking program that addressed Israeli facts and arguments so that "we could do better [and] represent Israel [in a] more balanced" way in the local media.

Drawing on support from friends in the Christian and Muslim communities, the advocacy committee has made a point of writing letters to the editor, calling radio talk shows and speaking with newsroom staff of local TV stations to help ensure a more fair approach to coverage of Israel and the conflict in Gaza.

"During the recent Gaza conflict, there was a feeling in the community that we weren't doing enough," Esther Marcus said. "So we called a meeting to tell people what could be done."

Allan Perlmutter, another committee member, said the general London community was ill-informed about Israel.

"Slowly, over the years, we've been able to support Israel by writing articles and bringing the correct image of the country" to the public, he said.

He added that most of the committee was surprised by how fast the pro-Palestinian reaction to the latest Gaza conflict manifested itself and how it succeeded by "demanding" coverage in the media.

Gissin advised the group that the best way to level the playing field in the media is for any and all community members to "make themselves available" to newscasters so that they can report both sides of the story.

Amir Gissin

Committee members also spoke candidly about a lack of resources and knowledgeable spokespeople during the recent war in Gaza.

To help with this, the Londoners have sought the help of the Canada-Israel Committee on occasion to help craft letters to the editor or get information about Israel that could be shared with the community and to help the committee "work more independently," Terry Marcus said.

"Other [small Jewish] communities should not be shy and ask for help" as the London community has, Perlmutter said, adding that his advice to other communities is not to wait for a new crisis before forming similar advocacy initiatives.

"Do it now," he said. "There will be another war, another conflict… so there's no time to wait."

At the local level, "it's up to each community to get advocacy done," Peretz said, to nods from the rest of the committee.

The London Jewish community is also an aging one, which has had some ramifications for committee members, many of whom have adult children.

"We're experiencing… that our kids are becoming less active. So we must set an example, because if we don't speak out, they certainly won't," Terry Marcus said.

The committee also recently decided to come up with a list of media-ready "simple sound bites" so that their messages wouldn't be lost or get taken out of context in future interviews.

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What will a Netanyahu government look like?

By URIEL HEILMAN
JTA

When Israeli President Shimon Peres named Benjamin Netanyahu to form Israel's next government last week, one key question about the government was answered. Many others, however, were left unresolved.

Analysis

Unlike Kadima party leader Tzipi Livni, who had the opportunity to become prime minister last fall but could not form a coalition, the Likud's Netanyahu undoubtedly will succeed in assembling a coalition government and assuming the post of prime minister.

What will governing partners look like?

Netanyahu has said he wants the broadest possible coalition, and has publicly called on Labor (13 seats) and Kadima (28 seats) to join him in a national unity government. But Livni appears to be leaning against joining a Netanyahu-led government, and Labor's Ehud Barak has indicated that the party wants to rebuild itself in the opposition.

If all else fails, Netanyahu can bank on having right-wing partners to form the necessary 61-seat majority for his coalition in the 120-seat Knesset: Yisrael Beiteinu (15 seats), Shas (11), and smaller parties including National Union (4), the Jewish Home (3) and United Torah Judaism (5), which would would line up behind Likud (27 seats) – as long as Netanyahu promises the religious parties goodies like welfare and education funding.

But such a government (65 seats) would hamstring Netanyahu in peacemaking efforts. Yisrael Beiteinu's leader, Avigdor Lieberman, said a year ago when he pulled out of the coalition with Kadima that his goal was to stop the Annapolis peace process with the Palestinians. His stance has not changed, leaving Netanyahu with little wiggle room to advance that process. Shas would bolt the coalition if Netanyahu discussed Jerusalem with the Palestinians. And any number of those parties might block Israel-Syria peacemaking, which Netanyahu pursued clandestinely during his tenure as prime minister from 1996 to 1999.

While Netanyahu is no dove, he's not as hawkish as these potential coalition partners, a fact that partly explains why he would prefer to have a broader coalition, one that includes his major rival, Livni, and Kadima's 28 seats.For Livni, now that Netanyahu has bested her in the contest to form the next government, the question is whether she should join them or fight them.

The argument can go both ways.

On the one hand, Livni wants no part of a government that is not committed to peacemaking with the Palestinians, which has been her primary focus for the past year and a half. She fears that any coalition with the likes of Shas and Yisrael Beiteinu would make the pursuit of peace impossible, and Kadima's presence in the government would serve as little more than a fig leaf for hawkish policy.

Moreover, staying in the opposition would give Livni a chance to build Kadima from the outside as a party devoted to peace and an alternative to a government that could be on a collision course with Washington, not to mention the Arab world. Such a government, she must figure, would be unlikely to last a full term.

However, if Livni refuses to partner with Netanyahu in a coalition government, she pretty much guarantees Israel's next government will be unabashedly right wing. Instead, she could join Likud and possibly mitigate the government's hawkishness and give Netanyahu more room to manoeuvre when it comes to Arab-Israel peacemaking. That would be the case especially if Labor joined the government, too.

Furthermore, given the unique threats facing Israel, especially from Iran, the country could use a national unity government.

So for Livni, the choice may be between party and country.

Coalition aside, the other major unanswered question now is where does Netanyahu intend to lead Israel? With the old distinctions between right and left no longer in force, the question on the Palestinian front is how fast Israel will push for a two-state solution. Livni believes the window of opportunity is closing, whereas Netanyahu believes the Palestinians are not yet ready for their own state. During the campaign, Netanyahu was purposely vague about his vision for a two-state solution – if, indeed, he has one.

Israeli President Shimon Peres officially asked Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu last week to try to form a coalition government. [Israel Sun]

* * *

With Israel facing the prospect of a nuclear Iran, serious threats on its southern border (Hamas in Gaza) and northern border (Hezbollah in Lebanon), and the prospect of a crippling economic crisis, this is no doubt a pivotal moment in Israeli history.

The question is where Israel goes from here.

In related developments, Netanyahu met with Barak Monday morning in Jerusalem in an effort to recruit the dovish Labor party for his future coalition, but to no avail.

Barak rejected the invitation, saying: "The voters' verdict has sent the Labor party into the opposition, and I told Netanyahu that we will serve as a responsible, serious and constructive opposition."

Livni said she and Netanyahu made no progress in their late-night meeting Sunday.

She said Kadima is still headed for opposition. On Sunday, Netanyahu and Livni agreed to meet again for talks in the next few days, but stressed that no coalition negotiations are underway.

"I will be taking Kadima into the opposition," Livni told reporters Sunday night after their first meeting since the Feb. 10 election. "Netanyahu has asked for another meeting, and I agreed. As far as I am concerned, this meeting has changed nothing."

She said there are still "profound differences" between the two parties' positions on the peace process and talks with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu said he will press on with his efforts to establish a broad coalition, and that he will meet with Livni and Barak again later this week.

Briefing reporters, Netanyahu said he told Livni, "I will continue to try to form a national unity government to counter the threats facing Israel. This is the will of the people."

Netanyahu listed the threats facing the country, adding that "it is incumbent upon us that we unite all of our forces for this common goal."

He also hinted at the gaps between Kadima and Likud, but added, "I believe we can overcome these differences with a little goodwill. However, if Kadima tries to scupper a unity government, it will find a way to do so. We can and must find a common path... In the end, unity will prevail and we will find a common path."

Earlier Sunday, Livni declared that she intended to remain in opposition, and her parliamentary faction voted to back her in "upholding the principles with which Kadima went to the voters and ensuring their realization as a condition for any entry into the government."

Before the meeting, Netanyahu's associates said he planned to make Kadima a generous offer, including two of the top three cabinet portfolios – defence, finance and foreign affairs – and full partnership in drafting the government guidelines.

They also said he would promise to continue final-status negotiations with the Palestinians. That is a key issue for Livni, who was in charge of these talks as foreign minister in the outgoing government.

With files from Ha'aretz.

CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS
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1919-2009

Notice is hereby given that
the Canadian Jewish Congress
will hold its 29th Plenary Assembly
at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue,
100 Elder Street, Toronto, Ontario on May 31, 2009.

Avis est donné que la 29e Assemblée plénière
du Congrès juif canadien,
se déroulera le 31 mai 2009
à la synagogue Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda,
100 Elder Street, Toronto (Ontario).

Israel Briefs

Syrian site likely nuclear

Traces of uranium and graphite were found in samples taken from the site of a suspected nuclear reactor in Syria, the United Nations nuclear watchdog said. The International Atomic Energy Agency made the disclosure Feb. 19. The discovery of additional uranium as well as graphite, which is used to build a nuclear reactor core, is a "significant" find, Reuters quoted a senior UN official as saying. The samples were taken last June from the site, which Israel bombed in 2007. Israel and the United States have claimed the site was a nascent nuclear reactor; Syria says it was a conventional military facility.

Peres questions pullout

Israel "should have done things differently" in its 2005 pullout from Gaza, Israel's president told U.S. Jewish leaders. "Whatever will happen in the future, we shall not repeat the mistakes we made in leaving Gaza," Shimon Peres told members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations during a question-and-answer session. Peres, a supporter of territorial withdrawal, clarified after the talk that he objected to the way the Gaza withdrawal was handled. He also told Presidents Conference members that the direction of Israel's future policies, not who heads the next government, is the critical issue.

UN: Hamas stole arms

The United Nations confirmed that Hamas stole seven tons of unexploded Israeli weapons stored in UN warehouses in Gaza. The explosives, fired by Israel during its military operation in Gaza, were set to be destroyed by controlled detonation. The mostly unexploded tank shells were under Hamas guard when they were stolen, *Ha'aretz* reported. The theft was discovered earlier last week, but confirmed Feb. 17 by the United Nations and the Israel Defence Forces. A UN Mines Action Team has worked to collect and dispose of the unexploded weapons since the operation ended in mid-January, the BBC reported. The team has been waiting for Israeli approval to bring equipment into Gaza to neutralize the weapons. The arms, which could easily be set off accidentally, are being stored near major population areas, *Ha'aretz* reported.

Pope's Israel visit dates set

Pope Benedict XVI's trip to Israel will take place the second week in May. Rev. Rifat Bader, a spokesperson for the Church in Jordan, announced last week that Benedict will visit Israel May 8-11, the Catholic news agency Zenit reported. Before going to Israel, the Pope will visit Jordan, where he will make a stop at Mount Nebo, from where tradition says Moses saw the Promised Land, and at a site on the Jordan River believed to be the place where Jesus was baptized. Zenit said the Pope also is expected to meet in Jordan with Islamic leaders in the mosque of Prince Hussein. The pope is scheduled to visit Jerusalem, Nazareth and Bethlehem.

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite our readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes. They should not exceed 2,000 words.

We must receive your submissions no later than Friday, March 12. E-mail submissions are preferred, but works can also be sent by mail or brought to our office.

E-mail: **info@cjnews.com.** Mail: 1500 Don Mills Rd., Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4.

Submissions will *not* be returned. The CJN will not enter into any correspondence with participants.

Critics aside, Israeli officials see successes in Gaza operation

By LESLIE SUSSER

Analysis

A month after the Gaza war, with Qassam rockets continuing to fall in southern Israel, many skeptical Israelis are questioning whether the war achieved anything.

Since the ceasefire on Jan. 18, militia have fired nearly 50 rockets and mortars at civilian targets in the Gaza periphery. Israel has retaliated with targeted assassinations and air strikes against smuggling tunnels along the Gaza-Egyptian border.

The skeptics say the current state of affairs is identical to the situation that existed before the war: Hamas firing rockets and Israel reacting with extreme restraint. So, they say, everything is back to square one.

Defence Minister Ehud Barak says nothing could be further from the truth.

Barak argues that Hamas took a heavy beating in the war and that the Gaza-Israel border is on the verge of a long period of quiet. He sees the daily dribble of rocket fire as nothing more than a pathetic attempt by Hamas to show it's still around. And, he says, the fact that Hamas keeps saying how close the sides are to a new 18-month lull, or *tahadiya*, shows just how much they need it.

Indeed, it is Israel that is holding out and insisting that there will be no deal on a new lull until the captured Israel soldier Gilad Schalit is freed.

The view in the cabinet and among the top brass of the Israel Defence Forces is that the war achieved a number of highly significant goals. It transformed Israeli deterrence vis-a-vis Hamas and in the region as a whole, and it is only a matter of time before this becomes apparent on the Gaza front; it created conditions for the release of Schalit; and it paved the way for an inter-Palestinian Hamas-Fatah accommodation that could revive prospects for a two-state solution.

Indeed, Barak speaks of a watershed event in Israeli-Palestinian relations, the full consequences of which have yet to be fully understood.

Right-wing politicians such as Likud's leader Benjamin Netanyahu, who is likely to form the next government, argue that Barak and company did not finish the job, since they left Hamas in power, and that sooner or later Israel will have to go into Gaza again to topple the radical Islamists.

Even Kadima leader Tzipi Livni says the IDF may have to strike again if Hamas renews weapons smuggling on a grand scale.

Nevertheless, all the signs on the ground suggest a relatively long period of quiet in the offing. This is partly because of Hamas' inability to find any effective counters to Israel's military moves. In the war, Hamas' elaborate defence strategy against an Israeli incursion collapsed. The web of tunnels and booby-trapped buildings proved ineffectual, and in the fighting many Hamas fighters and field commanders were killed with minimal Israeli losses.

The IDF estimate is that the Islamist organization does not have the stomach to go through all that again – at least not soon. In other words, the main strategic goal of Operation Cast Lead, the establishment of a deterrent balance, was achieved. Hamas needs a long period of quiet to rebuild devastated military and civilian infrastructures.

The war also transformed the relationship between Egypt and Hamas. Now in its mediation between Israel and Hamas, it is Egypt calling the shots with Hamas, not vice versa. And although Hamas has been conducting a terror spree in Gaza against Fatah loyalists, killing several and kneecapping others, there is renewed talk of a possible reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah that might allow Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to negotiate for all Palestinians, making a two-state solution more realistic than it was before the war.

Indeed, Fatah will likely get a toehold in Gaza for the first time since the Hamas seizure of power there in June 2007. When Israel as part of the lull opens border crossing points, they will be partly supervised by Palestinian Authority, mainly Fatah, personnel.

The new lull could take a few more days to go into effect because Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has made it dependent on Schalit's release, and he is using the opening of the border crossings as a lever to pressure Hamas to free Schalit. Olmert refuses to open the crossings until a deal on Schalit's release is struck.

In return for Schalit, Hamas is demanding the release of 1,400 Palestinian terrorists in Israeli jails, including 450 of its choosing. Israel names 550 others, with the rest mainly women and minors. Among the 450 are the planners of many of the worst terrorist outrages of the second intifadah, including the rash of lethal suicide bombings in buses, restaurants, discos and other public places.

Until now, the Israeli government had been against releasing most of the 450, now the differences are only over a few dozen names. One of those slated to be freed is Fatah's Marwan Barghouti, who is seen as a future Palestinian leader and as one who might have the moral authority to make peace with Israel.

Although the Gaza war inflamed popular opinion against Israel throughout the region, and harmed Israel's close ties with Muslim Turkey, it helped restore Israel's deterrent capacity by restoring perceptions of Israel as a regional superpower that was dented by the IDF's relatively poor performance in the 2006 Lebanon war. It also showed that the 2006 war may have been more successful than first thought: bottom line, the Iranian-backed Hezbollah stayed out of the fighting in Gaza despite the fact that a fellow Iranian proxy was taking a beating there. This suggests that the same kind of deterrent model could hold for Hamas, too.

Soldiers of the IDF celebrate as they leave Gaza.

[Isranet photo]

The war in Gaza had other regional ramifications. It was a first major setback for Iran after a string of perceived regional successes, especially the American war in Iraq that enabled the Iranian regime to create an arc of influence from Tehran through southern Iraq and Damascus to Lebanon and Gaza. Thus the war in Gaza not only was a victory for Israel, but also for regional anti-Iranian moderates such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

The Achilles' heel in the post-Gaza war situation is the continued smuggling from Egypt into Gaza. Internal Security Minister Avi Dichters has warned that despite its goodwill, Egypt is not moving quickly enough to block the arms smuggling routes, which could undermine hopes for quiet. Indeed, a new Hamas arms buildup and a new right-wing government in Israel could mean that the lull might not last as long as Barak and the other military planners of Operation Cast Lead had hoped.

Canada assumes leadership role at summit on anti-Semitism

Continued from page 1

"Anti-Zionism is the new anti-Semitism," said Michael Gove, a British Conservative MP.

Gove said Islamist groups are uniting with the far left to try to delegitimize Israel and question its right to exist.

"The extreme left is dressing it as anti-colonialism," he said.

Recalling trips he took to the Babi Yar Holocaust memorial site in Ukraine and to Mumbai, India, last year, Kenney said that although "68 years and thousands of miles separate the ravine of Babi Yar from the debris of Chabad's Nariman House [site of the murders of Rabbi Gavriel Holzberg and his wife Rivkah last year by Pakistani Islamist terrorists in Mumbai], these places are connected by the same uniquely durable and pernicious evil of anti-Semitism. Even peaceful and pluralistic Canada sees signs that this evil is newly resurgent."

Kenney highlighted some Canadian initiatives intended to combat anti-Semitism at home, including Ottawa's application to become a full member of the international task force on commemoration, education and research of the Holocaust, withdrawing from the upcoming "Durban II" UN anti-racism conference and apologizing to the Jewish community for Canada's "own history of officially sanctioned anti-Semitism, the most notorious manifestation of which was Canada's refusal to accept the hundreds of Jewish European refugees aboard the St. Louis as it arrived in Halifax harbour in 1938."

Kenney said he received "commendations" from many foreign parliamentarians and Jewish lay leaders at the conference about the work Canada has done on anti-Semitism, some of whom were "keen" to have him speak directly to their own governments about it in the future.

Cotler, one of the driving forces behind the summit, said the new anti-Semitism attacks the "Jewish collective" by attacking Israel's right to exist.

Whereas old anti-Semitism "wished to eliminate individual Jewish people," Cotler said, "the new anti-Semitism aims at getting rid of the Jewish state."

British Labour MP Denis MacShane said that "many of those responsible for this new anti-Semitism are Islamist groups."

Like MacShane, the vast majority of legislators who attended the conference were not Jewish.

U.S. Congressman Chris Smith, a Republican, said that the way to fight anti-Semitism is by imposing serious penalties for its perpetrators.

Smith said U.S. President Barack Obama should not take part in the so-called Durban II conference, a follow-up to the notorious 2001 United Nations anti-racism conference that turned into an Israel-baiting forum. Smith also slammed the United Nations.

"They pay lip service to the issue of anti-Semitism, but don't really act," he said.

But Ottawa has pledged to act and Kenney invited members of the London conference to Canada next year in the expectation that the country would play host to the summit's followup next year. He told The CJN that he would be working on this with his colleagues across party lines to sort out the "modalities" over the coming months for this "tremendous and hugely valuable" event.

There are, Kenney told the attendees, "a good number of Canadians here who would be delighted to see this important work cross the Atlantic."

Cotler echoed Kenney's sentiment, telling The CJN that this event was not merely a "founding conference," it was the founding of an organization.

"It's not a one-off. It's now been institutionalized… with a declaration which we will seek to implement," Cotler said, adding that the conference exceeded all his expectations and that he was gratified at the attendance by Muslim parliamentarians from Tunisia, Morocco and Azerbaijan.

(The full text of the London Declaration on Combating anti-Semitism can be found on The CJN's website, www.cjnews.com.)

Despite the bleak picture presented at the conference, experts said they were encouraged by the positive response of legislators who signed the declaration committing themselves to continue to work together, along with their respective governments, to halt the rise in anti-Semitism.

Cotler praised the conference and its issuance of the London Declaration on Combating anti-Semitism as a major breakthrough.

"Here you had 125 parliamentarians from over 40 countries adopt a very significant declaration, which is not only a landmark in the struggle against anti-Semitism, but a landmark in the use of effective 'soft powers' as it's called, in international law," he said. "This is a declaration which will have impact."

He added: "It's a recognition of the responsibility of the international community to prevent incitement to genocide. Now we have a parliamentary declaration that affirms that and on which we can rely for purposes of our work. Here you have… an acknowledgment of the delegitimization of Israel in the international arena, and a clarion call saying, 'This shall not take place.'"

With files from JTA

Arab group calls Kenney 'professional whore'

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney was recently given an additional title, albeit a crude and uncomplimentary one.

Last week, Kenney was termed a "professional whore" by Khaled Mouammar, president of the Toronto-based, non-profit Canadian Arab Federation (CAF), both for Kenney's personal support of Israel and his denunciations of radical pro-Palestinian supporters carrying signs supporting Hamas and Hezbollah – considered terrorist groups by Canada – at rallies across the country last month against Israel's recent military operation in Gaza.

The CAF received nearly $450,000 from Kenney's ministry to operate a two-year settlement program in Toronto to help provide new immigrants with language and job search skills. The CAF program is scheduled for renewal in 2010.

Kenney said his department is now evaluating whether certain groups – including the CAF – should continue to receive public funding, because of their alleged promotion of terror groups and anti-Semitism.

Mouammar has said that Kenney's threat to cut funding to his organization will have a negative impact on immigrants.

In an interview last week, Kenney told The CJN he "couldn't care less" about the disparaging comments made by Mouammar.

"They can say whatever they like about the government and ministers. It's a free country. I've had much worse things said about me by much better people," he said. "But my point [in weighing whether to continue funding the CAF], is whether an organization … that distributes videos produced by Hamas and Islamic Jihad that glorifies terrorism [and] indoctrinates children into the cult of anti-Semitic hatred… is not an organization, in my opinion, that should be receiving taxpayer subsidies."

Pointing to his speech at the Inter-parliamentary Coalition on Anti-Semitism last week in London, Kenney said he raised the CAF issue, among others, by telling the world that Canada "takes a zero-tolerance approach to expressions of anti-Semitism in the public square."

He said that certain organizations, such as the CAF and the Canadian Islamic Congress, "receive their share of media attention and public notoriety" and express "extreme and hateful propaganda [and] expect to be treated as respectable interlocutors in the public discourse."

Kenney said he is unapologetic about his decision to review the CAF's funding.

"The more Mr. Mouammar… speaks, the more clear it is that he doesn't speak for the vast majority of Canadians of Arab origin, who are honest, decent, thoughtful, democratic, moderate people; most of whom came to this country seeking life in a stable, liberal democracy, not this kind of shrill, cartoonish voice of extremism that he too often represents," Kenney said.

Asked whether he thinks removing funding from the CAF will disadvantage new immigrants, Kenney responded that those assertions are "complete baloney."

"Our government has actually increased settlement funding five-fold over what it was under the previous government," he said, adding that he's not considering "for one minute" reducing language-training programs or settlement programs.

"I'm simply saying, when we make funding decisions we should take into account the character of the organization and its leadership. And if they're promoting extremism, or [in the case of the CAF], implicitly promoting anti-Semitism, I think that should be a consideration. There are no shortage of worthy organizations out there that can help us deliver solid settlement [programming] without us having to help finance the distribution of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad videos."

The Officers, Board of Directors and Staff of

Jewish National Fund of Canada

and

Jewish National Fund of Toronto

are deeply saddened by the sudden passing of our beloved

Ben Yomen Simon Prossin ז"ל

Executive Director, Toronto Region

May his memory be for a blessing

Ben's nineteen years of devotion to our organization and his ongoing commitment to Israel and Jewish communal life will leave a lasting impact on all of us at JNF and the entire Jewish community

We extend our sincere condolences to Dr. Albert and Andrea Prossin, Rita Aronson and Sylvia & Irving Brown and the entire Prossin Family

May they be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem

Dr. Sharon Marcovitz Hart
National President
JNF Canada

Jerry Werger
President
JNF Toronto

Joe Rabinovitch
Executive Vice-President
JNF Canada

Music and the world it makes

By NORMAN RAVVIN
Special to The CJN

Biographies present readers and their writers with peculiar challenges. The expectation that a subject's life should be covered from start to finish often leads the historical record to be treated like a wallpapering project – cover every nook and cranny, and the subject may come fully to life.

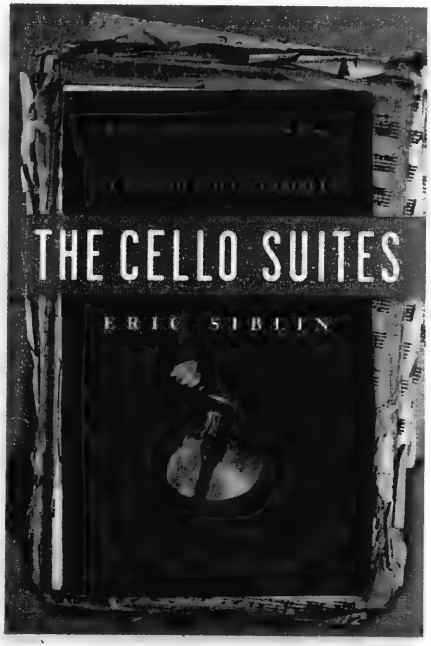
Norman Ravvin

In The Cello Suites: J.S. Bach, Pablo Casals, and the Search for a Baroque Masterpiece (House of Anansi Press), Eric Siblin avoids this outcome by giving his pursuit of a pair of musical lives a thoroughly personal spin, and by making the music that links Bach and Casals as important a character as its composer and its most famous interpreter.

The many lives of the six Cello Suites propel Siblin's book. Composed by Bach in the early 1720s, the Suites receded into relative obscurity after Bach's death. Their reappearance on the contemporary musical scene was almost entirely influenced by Pablo Casals, the Catalan-born cellist who became one of the most celebrated musicians of the postwar era. Siblin approaches the story of Casals' adolescent discovery of the Suites with great sympathy. One senses, not only in Casals' outing with his father that led to the discovery, but also in his mother's devotion to his career, a great family romance supporting the development of musical genius.

Casals' championing of the Suites challenged musical assumptions: the Suites were dismissed as études, appropriate as technical exercises; the instrument they were played on was not thought to be an "important solo instrument"; and as some 19th-century experts would have it, Bach was a "mere old-fashioned wig stuffed with learning."

Siblin reveals how changing attitudes toward the Suites and their composer reflect broad cultural shifts in the18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Bach's musical career was a success, but he was by no means a leading musical figure in his lifetime. His music, Siblin tells us, "continued to have no popular resonance well into the 19th century." For a composer who was a part of the Nazi pantheon, it is ironic that his revival was largely motivated by a converted Jew, Felix Mendelssohn, the grandson of Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn.



Siblin does not duck the subject of how Bach's work traffics in what might be characterized as everyday 18th-century German prejudice toward Jews. In this, it is the author's willingness to insert himself into his narrative that enlivens the material and removes it from a more conventional biographical approach.

He describes a 2006 performance of Bach's St. John Passion by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra as "reaching sublime heights," but then confronts the uncomfortable facts: "Seated in the acoustically ideal second-tier balcony, I was well placed to enjoy the music… I can't say the words killed the experience for me, but they did add a measure of discomfort.

"From the first reference to Jesus being taken away by 'Jewish police,' the drama bluntly hits the listener over the head with the fact that [Pontius] Pilate resists crucifying him. It is the Jewish crowd that clamours for crucifixion… Perhaps the anti-Semitic component of the story was a commonplace touchstone of faith."

In impressive detail, Siblin evokes the Suites' creation, their staying power and their contemporary relevance. When set alongside the passages he quotes from authoritative Bach biographies, his approach seems remarkably fresh, direct and unencumbered by the tone of reverence and scholarly distance that renders many biographical portraits inert.

> *'Reaching sublime heights'*

An element of the story to which Siblin is particularly attracted is the loss, at some point over the course of centuries, of Bach's original manuscript for the Cello Suites. Its absence lends a degree of mystery to the music. We cannot be sure how Bach intended the Suites to sound. There is even some question concerning the instrument he intended them for. And most strangely, not too long ago, an Australian academic argued that their composer was in fact Bach's wife, herself a trained musician.

This mysterious chapter in the life of the Cello Suites is reminiscent of other great cultural losses that personalize our relationship to the art under discussion, since we can all see ourselves as part of the dreamed-of recovery. Siblin expertly includes in his narrative "the thrill of the chase, the detective story behind it, the possibility that a manuscript with secrets to tell has been lodged in a salt mine or is biding its time in a dilapidated German castle."

Eric Siblin's The Cello Suites will be in bookstores on March 21.

Norman Ravvin is the chair of the Concordia University Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies. His books include Hidden Canada: An Intimate Travelogue and the novel Lola by Night.

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The Dybbuk stays as true to the original as possible

By ADAM MICHAEL SEGAL
Special to The CJN

The classic mystical and poetic Jewish love story, The Dybbuk, is coming to the stage in Toronto.

Presented by Teatron Theatre, the popular play runs from Feb. 25 to March 8 at the Leah Posluns Theatre.

"The way this story plays out is so charming," says director Ari Weisberg, who is also the founder of Teatron, now in its sixth season.

"It's colourful and interesting, sometimes happy while sometimes gripping, and always exciting."

Set in the chassidic society of 18th-century eastern Europe, The Dybbuk tells the story of a young lady, Leye, who falls in love with a poor man, Chonnon, whom her father disapproves of.

The poor fellow eventually passes on, but his spirit enters his maiden's body and, in essence, takes over her.

The challenges this exorcism engenders, along with issues of faith, tradition and material status, are all themes explored in this classic, originally penned by the revered playwright S. Anski.

The village's rebbe also plays a central role in the play, as he grapples with questions about his own belief system.

Weisberg notes that although the main story line is rather simple, the subplots and issues the play delves into are all quite complex and have resonated with audiences for decades.

"It's a straightforward story, but when you get to the underlying meaning behind the people, it's far more complex," he offers.

"It is probably one of the most challenging plays I have ever directed and produced."

Notable actors in the superb cast of 21 include seasoned thespian Howard Jerome playing the part of Reb Azrielke, the young and talented Sarah Illiatovitch-Goldman as Leye, with Mark Albert as Sender, Ron Boyd as The Messenger and Jonah Hundert taking on the role of Chonnon.

Although minor adaptations were made to the script, Weisberg made it a point to stay as true to the original as possible, including the incorporation of beautiful poems by the late Israeli poet laureate Chaim Nachman Bialik.

"I really like the original and I would say we kept 99 per cent of it intact," says Weisberg.

Teatron Theatre focuses exclusively on Jewish-themed plays and is self-described as "unveiling the treasures of Jewish tradition, enriching and inspiring the Jewish experience of all theatregoers, leading to better understanding and harmony, while maintaining Jewish values."

Following The Dybbuk, the company will be moving from Leah Posluns to a smaller venue at the Toronto Centre for the Arts, providing a forum for more intimate productions.

An upcoming performance in the works will be the Neil Simon classic Brighton Beach Memoirs.

For tickets, phone 417-781-5527 or visit www.teatrontheatre.com.

Howard Jerome as Reb Azrielke confronts the dybbuk-possessed Leye (Sarah Illiatovitch-Goldman) in Teatron Theatre's latest production, The Dybbuk, at the Leah Posluns Theatre until March 8.

DANS LA VIE

An elderly Jewish woman needs assistance in her daily routine when her son's work requires him to leave town for a while. The son arranges for an Arab woman to be caregiver to his cantankerous mother. At first glance it appears to be a collision of cultures, and a recipe for disaster! However, as the two women exchange stories, it becomes evident that they have more in common than they thought. This lovely French comedy is a sensitive and hopeful portrayal of cross-cultural camaraderie.

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Indie artist's 100th gig, a hard-earned milestone

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Last January at the legendary Hugh's Room in Toronto, Dave Borins played his 100th gig, a milestone that means a lot to the young musician.

"That gig marked a year's worth of me doing it all on my own, from the grassroots level up," Borins, 26, said.

"It was a year of me putting the pedal to the metal, keeping it honest."

Borins spent 2008 working hard, recording, performing and promoting himself, after the release of his debut CD Songs of Sense and Colour, a collection of 11, mostly original acoustic-flavoured rock songs.

"It's an indie record from start to finish," Borins said. "I found my own producer and paid for it all."

These days, it's important for an indie artist to put out their own CDs in order to get noticed. "It was important for me to throw my hat into the ring. Today, you need a CD to get into festivals. Having this CD got me more gigs and more credibility."

Dave Borins does it all on his own...

Recording your own music, gigging frequently and marketing yourself are all part of the trade for the indie artist.

"Record companies won't even look at you anymore unless you have a CD," the self-taught guitarist says. It also helps to have press and a management team behind you.

"The ironic thing is that when you reach the part when you are attractive to a record company, you don't need them anymore."

Although doing it alone is part in parcel of being an indie artist, Borins is well aware of the need for a community of like-minded people.

"There is strength in numbers. I am doing this alone, with a little help from my friends."

His friends are part of a "revolving door" of a song-writing collective of various local musicians called Four Corners that he's a part of.

"It's a group of us doing it all ourselves together," he says. They offer one another support and call upon one another to play with them on stage when necessary. "We love to see gigs, help each other out and give advice to each other."

Someone else he occasionally gets good advice from is his old Forest Hill high school choirmate Sophie Milman, the Juno Award-winning jazz singer.

"Even then we could tell she was great," he says about her. "She had this unbelievable vibrato. She sang in a very old-fashioned way, it was very beautiful."

Borins says that maintaining contacts in the industry is key to survival in the cutthroat music industry.

"You need people in this business – you need to be part of a community, you can't be alone on top of a mountain singing to birds."

Borins would know all about that. His father, Mel, a holistic healer and travel writer, would take him on his off-the-beaten-path world trips when he was young.

"By the time I was 13, I had seen five continents," he said. "This helped me get exposed to different music and cultures."

Borins spent several years at Camp Walden (where he is known as BoBo Borins) leading canoe trips for summer campers, as well as playing there.

"I've spent much time in the wilderness. I went alone on 20-day trips through the Himalayas and doing the Inca Trail. It's very inspiring."

When describing himself musically, Borins purposely avoids the overused term "singer-songwriter."

"I play acoustic rock 'n' roll. When you say singer-songwriter, I get an image of a guy quietly weeping on stage, pouring out his heart. I sort of do that, but with a lot of energy.

"I sweat on stage," he says. "I'm like Bruce Springsteen in a way. It's not quite folk or country, but has elements of both."

Borins says his influences are very eclectic, ranging from Bob Dylan, Neil Young and Joni Mitchell to newer artists like Jeff Tweedy and Townes Van Zandt. "I consume music like crazy," he says.

Borins plays frequently, mostly in the Greater Toronto Area, but he's also played in Montreal and New York. He would like to tour more, but "it's very expensive and I can't afford to take it on the road in a meaningful way yet."

Borins had some interest from a management/ production company after the release of his CD, but the deal went sour. "They didn't quite understand who I was," he said. After they set up interviews for him with small-town U.S. newspapers he would never ever visit, he decided to part ways. "It was an inefficient way to spend time and money."

Borins says he learned a lot from that experience and came out of it more mature. He went to workshops, returned to Camp Walden and started to write and record more songs, the result of which can be heard on his next project, a new CD he is currently putting the finishing touches on. "I'm looking forward to seeing the fruits of my labour," he says.

Meanwhile you can hear some of his songs on www.myspace.com/daveborins. His first CD is also available on iTunes.

He's playing at Cadillac Lounge on Feb. 26 and on March 14 he plays with an orchestra at the Hart House Chamber Strings Pop Concert.

...but celebrated his 100th gig with a little help from his friends.

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Essays focus on Jewish Canadian women authors

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

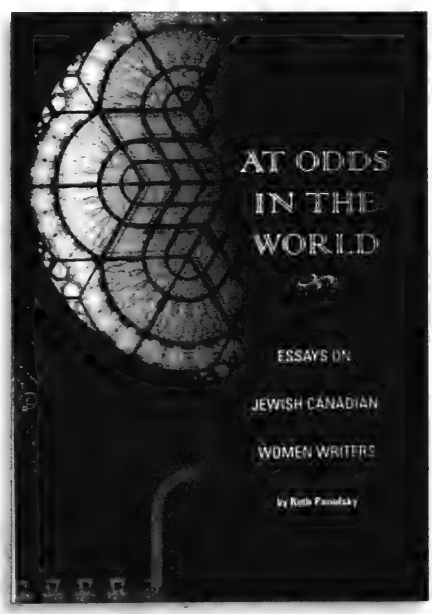
English professor Ruth Panofsky hopes that her new book will make readers aware that the experience of Jewish Canadian women is unique, varied, rich and important.

For her book At Odds in the World: Essays on Jewish Canadian Women Writers, Panofsky wrote a series of critical essays on the works of seven authors – Miriam Waddington, Adele Wiseman, Lilian Nattel, Helen Weinzweig, Fredelle Bruser Maynard, Joyce Maynard and Nora Gold – that tackle the themes of sexuality, patriarchy, marriage and motherhood.

"Throughout my career I've always been interested in the experience of Jewish Canadian women and I've looked for that experience in literature... Those experiences in the early days were hard to find," said Panofsky, a Ryerson University professor.

"There was a progression of locating other work by Jewish female writers, particularly Canadian, because there were a fair number of American Jewish writers, but the Canadian story wasn't told very much."

Panofsky, who won the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Award for Poetry last year for Laike and Nahum: A Poem in Two Voices, said she acted on a "personal impulse" to "find the voices of those who have not really been represented and... I wanted my own world experience reflected in literature."



She said that American Jewish female writers tend to write about being outside the tradition and being denied access to certain religious practices.

"They do feel to be on the margins of their own society and at the margins of the larger society as well," Panofsky added.

"I want readers to be cognizant that the experience of being a Jewish female in Canada is something unique and rich and varied and important."

English professor and author Ruth Panofsky

She said that although many Canadian Jewish female writers describe being marginalized and undervalued, they also value their community and they don't want to separate from it.

> *'The experience of being a Jewish female is unique and varied'*

"They seek desperately to find ways to include themselves in it, and it is that tension, that feeling that they are both in the world and out of it at the same time, that I wanted readers to see and to recognize."

She said the last essay in the collection, titled The Freedom to Write, which examines works by Fredelle Bruser Maynard and her daughter, Joyce Maynard, was important to her because it was about a relationship between a Jewish mother who mentored her daughter in the art of living and writing.

"That mother and daughter describe a troubled, often painful relationship is not surprising, given the gargantuan task Fredelle undertook in spite of patriarchal resistance to worldly education for girls and a religious tradition that prescribes restrictive roles for women," she wrote.

Panofsky referred to another essay in her book based on the fiction of Wiseman and Nattel about Jewish prostitutes and motherhood.

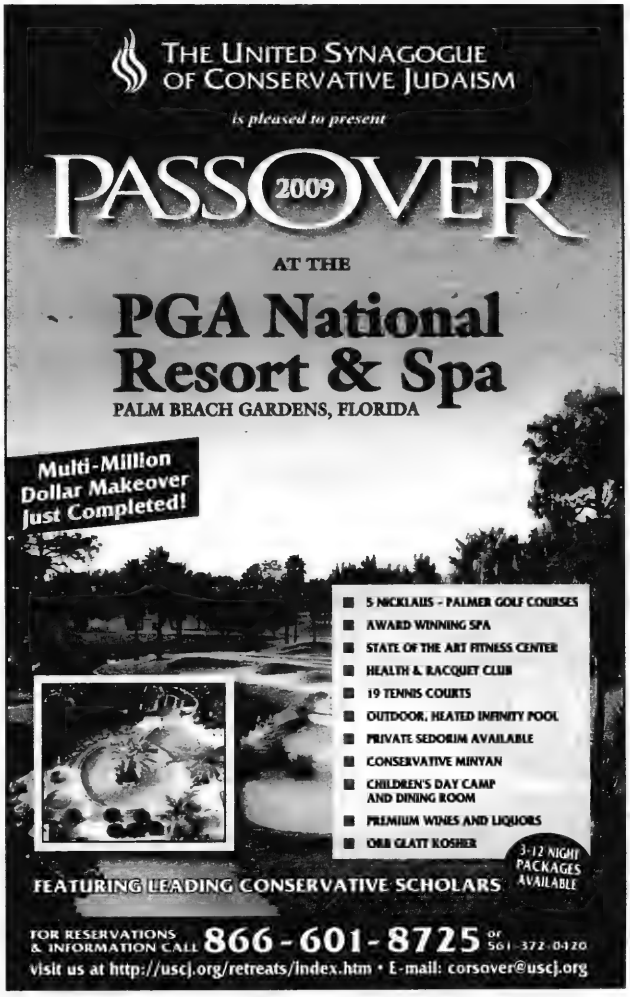
"The figure of the Jewish prostitute I always found very compelling because of her special vulnerability and also a remarkable strength," she said.

In her essay This Was Her Punishment, Panofsky wrote: "The prostitute may reclaim her Jewish identity through marriage, but the right to legitimate motherhood will elude the Jewish prostitute who remains thrice outcast, thrice isolate from the community of Jews, women and mothers that will neither forget nor forgive her improprieties."

Panofsky said that the issues examined in her book are important for the female Jewish community and hopes that writers will find it easier to explore what it means to be Jewish and female in today's society.

"There are many poets... and a growing number of contemporary writers who probe what it means to be Jewish from a very different perspective than earlier generations, so there is a real growing developing or growing interest in what it means to be Jewish and female," she said.

"Women, traditionally, have hesitated to be very open about their cultural identity and... despite the rise in anti-Semitism worldwide, in Canada there is a sense of openness and tolerance and interest in cultural diversity. I think that it is definitely encouraging our writers to explore their own identity through a range of perspectives."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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

CANTOR YIZCHAK MEIR HELFGOT TO JOIN LOCAL CANTORS AND MUSICIANS FOR FUNDRAISER

Renowned cantor **Yizchak Meir Helfgot**, who has sold out performances in opera houses in the United States, Europe and Israel, is coming to Toronto to perform Sing for the Children, a benefit concert with local cantors **Yaakov Motzen** and **Shlomo Sufrin**. The event also features Holy Blossom's **Benjamin Maissner**, Toronto's Jewish Choral Ensemble and the Philharmonic Experience conducted by **Yisroel Lamm**.

The concert is meant to raise money to benefit seriously ill children helped by Chai Lifeline Canada. "It's an evening of beautiful music combined with charity," said Chai Lifeline director **Mordechai Rothman**. Roy Thomson Hall, March 16, 7:30 p.m. 888-416-CHAI, www.chaiconcert.com

* * *

Topol to Play Tevye to Toronto: Thirty-eight years after he starred in **Norman Jewison**'s film adaptation of the stage musical Fiddler on the Roof, celebrated Israeli actor **Chaim Topol** is coming to Toronto as part of a "farewell tour" to perform the role of Tevye in Mirvish Productions' upcoming theatrical season.

Based on stories by **Sholem Aleichem**, Fiddler on the Roof was crafted into a musical by **Joseph Stein** with music by **Jerry Bock** and lyrics by **Sheldon Harnick**. Mirvish is importing the show as one of nine productions in its 2009-10 season. Other offerings include Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, The Harder They Come, Little House on the Prairie – the Musical, and a new Mel Brooks musical titled Young Frankenstein. 416-593-4225, www.mirvish.com

* * *

One Little Goat Theatre Company presents the English Canadian première of Someone Is Going to Come by **Jon Fosse**, who has been described as Norway's most innovative playwright since Ibsen. Focusing on the topic of sexual jealousy, the primal and provocative three-person play is featured in a new English translation by **Harry Lane** and **Adam Seelig**, the company's artistic director and director of this production.

Tickets $23 to $12; Sundays pay what you can. Walmer Centre Theatre, 188 Lowther Ave. March 13 to 29. Theatregoers may purchase a ticket to the play as well as a copy of Seelig's newest play Talking Masks for $25. 416-915-0201, www.OneLittleGoat.org

* * *

TV & Film

• The World of Comedy Film Festival presents an eclectic mix of shorts, animation, featurettes and features next week in Toronto. Included in the list of 77 screenings is Israeli Intelligence, director **Alon Gur Arye**'s 45-minute hit from Israel. Arye is expected to attend this North American première of his film. Town Hall Theatre, Innis College, 2 Sussex Ave. Feb. 27 to March 1. Tickets $10 and $8 at the door. 416- 487-7574, www.worldcomedyfilmfest.com

• Skate to Survive, a recent 48-minute Canadian film, tells the story of **Ellen Burka**, a young girl in Amsterdam who was deported with her family to Westerbork and Theresienstadt. As an adult in Toronto, she made a career of figure skating and trained the famous skater **Toller Cranston**, as well as her daughter, **Petra Burka**, who won a World Figure Skating Championship. Omni 1 Television network, Sunday, March 1, 8:30 p.m.

• Shield of Solomon, a documentary by **Igal Hecht** and **Lior Cohen**, focuses on the plight of black Christian Sudanese refugees in Israel. CBC Documentary Channel, Tuesday, March 3 at 10 p.m.

Shield of Solomon airs on CBC Doc.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism presents a Purim celebration featuring **Patricia Rockman** and **Elaine Smookler** as the clown duo Pox and Vendetta, performing their skits Mirror, Mirror, Off the Wall and Lovestruck. $15. 18 Wynford Drive (Don Mills/Eglinton). Saturday, March 7, 7:30 p.m. 416-385-3910, roby@oraynu.org

• Toronto criminal lawyer **Robert Rotenberg** discusses and reads from his debut novel, Old City Hall, a fast-paced tale of murder and malice that brings both his local and legal knowledge into play. He appears at a Thriller Night at Harbourfront Centre as part of an authors program that also includes **Jose Latour**, author of Crime of Fashion, and **Michael Palmer**, author of The Second Opinion, a medical thriller. James Grainger hosts. $8. Lakeside Terrace, Harbourfront Centre, Wednesday, March 4, 7:30 p.m. 416-973-4000, www.readings.org

* * *

Passages: Toronto artist **Tutzi Seguin** was a dynamic and highly admired multimedia artist, art teacher and writer who threw herself into making art after the oldest of her three children died of a congenital heart condition in 1955.

Born in Romania about 1911, she immigrated to Canada in 1938 with her husband, George, and their year-old son. She became an expert producer of prints, collages, watercolours, oil paintings, hand-painted silk scarves, stained-glass, jewelry, ceramics and objets d'art. A linguist who could speak six languages, she taught numerous art workshops, volunteered as a tour guide at the Art Gallery of Ontario and entertained audiences with travelogues of places she had visited. She died Feb. 6 and was predeceased by her husband and children.

Cantorial concert to aid children with medical problems

Compiled by CJN Staff

Some of the world's leading cantors will unite to benefit seriously ill children served by Chai Lifeline Canada, its director Rabbi Mordechai Rothman, announced recently.

Conducted by Mordechai Sobol, the concert will be held March 16 at Roy Thomson Hall at 7:30 p.m.

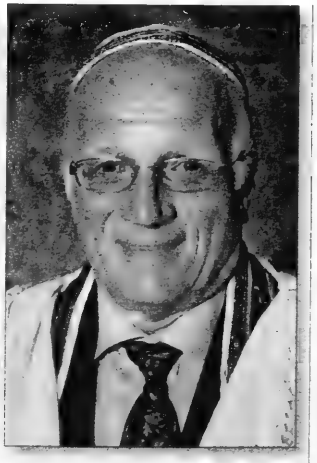
It features renowned Cantor Yizchak Meir Helfgot, who has performed in opera houses throughout the United States, Europe and Israel. He recently sold out a solo performance at the Metropolitan Opera House at the Lincoln Center. Helfgot was a close friend of the late legend, Luciano Pavarotti, and will be performing a special number in his memory.

Local cantors Ya'akov Motzen, Jodi Sufrin and Benjamin Maissner will be accompanied by Toronto's Jewish Choral Ensemble and a 65-piece symphony orchestra. The Philharmonic Experience, conducted by Yisroel Lamm, rounds out the evening's star-studded lineup.

Chai Lifeline provides a variety of programs and support services for children with serious illnesses and their families.

"Sing for the Children will bring together thousands of Chai Lifeline supporters for an evening of beautiful music combined with charity," Rabbi Rothman said. "The concert will bring vital support to Chai Lifeline Canada's families, thanks to the vision and dedication of Israel and Michelle Schachter, event chairs, who have worked tirelessly to co-ordinate an amazing array of musicians and singers."

Ya'akov Motzen



Benjamin Maissner

The concert has attracted fans and celebrities from New York, Los Angeles, Montreal and Mexico.

"Music has the unique ability to unite people from many different walks of life, which is exactly what Chai Lifeline does," Israel Schachter said. "During my time as a Chai Lifeline volunteer, I saw that people of all backgrounds and religious beliefs were helped by the organization and joined together for events and programs. Each child and their family deserves the same support, the very best."

International Chai Lifeline executive vice-president Stephen Scholar said the Canadian organization "has grown exponentially this year, expanding its client base from 20 families to over 100 Toronto families in a few short months. Proceeds from the concert will enable Chai Lifeline Canada to respond to increasing demands for assistance while maintaining its excellent quality of care."

Tickets for Sing for the Children can be purchased at www.chaiconcert.com or by calling 1-888-416-CHAI.

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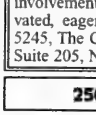

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Jewish leaders urge tennis body to boycott Dubai event

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U.S. Jewish leaders called last week for the Women's Tennis Association to boycott the Dubai Championships and to cancel the event in 2010 after Shahar Pe'er, Israel's top woman player, was barred from competing at this year's tournament in the United Arab Emirates.

"To discriminate as the UAE did against one player in this way smacks of bigotry and racism," the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations said in a statement.

Pe'er had to forfeit her place in last week's event after the UAE, which has no diplomatic ties with Israel, denied her an entry visa into the country. Israel's limited ties in the Arab world were severely strained by last month's three-week military offensive in Gaza.

The $2-million event features nine of the world's top 10 women tennis players. Dubai is hosting the men's tournament this week. The political row is expected to continue, because Israeli doubles specialist Andy Ram was slated to take part.

Last week, a U.S. congressman said he had received assurances Ram would be granted a visa, and as a result he would not ask the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) to cancel the event.

Shahar Pe'er

Representative Anthony Weiner of New York had scheduled a news conference yesterday to press the ATP to withdraw its backing for the tournament, a spokesperson for the Brooklyn congressman said.

Weiner said Yousef Al Otaiba, the United Arab Emirates ambassador to Washington, assured him Ram would be allowed to play in the event in this week's men's tournament.

"This must be declared unacceptable by the WTA and all international sporting associations. As we learned in the past, failure to condemn such actions and take corrective measures, proves destructive to international sporting competition," the conference presidents said.

"Jewish leaders call on [the] Women's Tennis Association to sanction Dubai and cancel [the] tournament in 2010."

Tournament officials defended their stance, saying local fans would have boycotted the event if an Israeli were allowed to compete, and that Pe'er's safety could have been compromised.

"The UAE's action is reminiscent of the Arab boycott, which we had all hoped was a thing of the past, especially in regard to sports events… The excuse that the UAE was concerned about Ms. Pe'er's security is spurious. Any country that cannot assure the security of all players should not be allowed to host it," they said.

"The Conference of Presidents also calls upon Sony Ericsson, sponsors of the tour, and Barclays, the sponsor of the Dubai championship tournament, to disassociate themselves from the UAE's actions and to drop their future sponsorship unless and until appropriate corrective measures are taken."

The Tennis Channel, which had rights to broadcast the Dubai WTA event in the United States, also boycotted the tournament, and last week the Wall Street Journal European edition also withdrew its sponsorship.

Meanwhile, the Swedish news agency TT reported last week that Sweden's first-round Davis Cup tie against Israel next month would be played in an empty arena.

The agency said the decision had been made by vote by a Malmo city committee. As of last week, authorities had offered no further explanation for the decision.

Junior rosters announced for Israeli hockey tourney

Young Jewish hockey players from Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal, Ottawa, Victoria and Vancouver will represent Canada at the first Under-18 World Jewish Hockey Tournament in Metulla, Israel, this summer.

In all, four Canadian provinces are represented, as the rosters for two Canadian teams in the five-team tournament have been announced. Joining Canada in the junior tournament will be the United States, Israel and France. A senior tournament will take place as well, involving Canada, the United States, Israel, France and eastern Europe (Russia and other countries combined).

Former NHL star Steve Thomas will coach Canada White, while TSN hockey analyst Pierre McGuire will coach Canada Red in the junior event, which runs from July 5 to 15.

"We think we're sending two teams capable of winning the gold medal," said Sherry Bassin, general manager of Team Canada. "There is so much Jewish hockey talent in this country, we decided we needed to send two teams instead of one."

TEAM CANADA WHITE

Coach: Steve Thomas, Toronto

Goalies Max Dizgun and Jake Karls, Montreal; defencemen Ori Abramson, Joshua Herrington, Matt Solomon and Zack Rota, Toronto; Spencer Neudorf, Montreal; Michael Vered, Ottawa; forwards Judah Batist, Jack Benaim, Robbie Frank, Jake Koplowitz, Daniel Leavens, Jesse Schwartz, Noah Schwartz, Matt Silcoff and Dylan Smoskowitz, Toronto; Elie Vered, Ottawa.

TEAM CANADA RED

Coach: Pierre McGuire, Montreal

Goalies Max Benitah, Toronto, and Shea Garber, Winnipeg; defencemen Ian Kapron-King, Victoria, Ryan Kruss, Toronto, Ben Micflikier and Jesse Pollock, Winnipeg, and Jordan Prizant, Montreal; forwards Beau Blanaru, Vancouver, Rory Bokser, Montreal, Daniel Fainman, Winnipeg, David Friedmann, David Freiman, Corey Kalk, Adam Levine and Dana Tenenbaum, Toronto; Adam Hennick and Corey Markus, Montreal.

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Golden ticket?

ALMOST FAMOUS

By Jacob Medjuck

I don't play the lottery. I believe that if you invest in yourself, you'll win every time. On the battlefield, however, I'll take any angle I can get.

Hollywood Boulevard is bedazzled with crazy people – mimes, musicians and mascots. The street people in Los Angeles strut about with the flair and confidence of seasoned stage stars. The whole town is a symbiotic organism that feeds low-carb locals into network television, box office blockbuster and YouTube-sensation factories that all but excrete American Idol biomass.

Aspiring filmmakers flock from afar to play the "right place at the right time" lottery. And the "right" place is simply Holy Hollywood. I add "holy" now because even the Subway sandwich shop on Pico Boulevard has a mezuzah. Remarkable.

I've made the mini-migration myself and am making rounds to production companies that just pre-screened my festival film, Summerhood.

I met the producers of the mega-hit franchise Transformers – ironically, two mid-west gentiles who've transformed themselves into kosher-style studio suits by peppering their speech with Yiddish slang.

I also met the producer of the upcoming He Man – a man so busy he had to outsource his bathroom breaks.

How can I win friends and influence these people, Mr. Dale Carnegie? How can I navigate an industry in which social techniques are as sharp and specialized as martial arts, and where politics and protocols are both as intricate and delicate as filo-dough pastry origami.

I've done the bar mitzvah circuit, shaken hands and toasted weddings. I've read dozens of industry books. I started at the bottom and finished at the bottom. Paid dues. Won festivals. Scrounged some credibility. And still it often feels like a lottery system. That's when the itch of hard work feels more like a rash.

"It's who you know," I hear. And it's true. But the part they leave out is that it's never who you think it's going to be. I've had tremendous support, but often from the most surprising places, never from the Hollywood hook-ups that I came here to chase.

One festival fan wrote a friend at Miramax, and they invited us in. Another public screening got us a meeting at Warner Brothers – something my own relentless e-mails and calls never yielded. Hmmm.

I work very hard, and all the time, but the breakthroughs always seem to come from areas of relaxed effort. I think for fitness' sake that I should continue to press on as usual. I feel hard work and luck will intersect very soon and preparation will only be an asset.

Until that time, I scratch and win. I bingo my brains out and rub antique lamps. And what's my reward? Parking tickets. I've got more L.A. parking tickets now than T-shirts.

So what part of the journey is this? Hopefully, the best part.

I'll explain. As I took my own turn walking down Hollywood Boulevard, ambitions broadly fashioned, I got into my car and noticed another parking ticket goading me from the windshield.

Great.

Getting out to grab it, I found a package just lying in the street – it was an envelope from a major talent agency that had been lost in transit, right there on on the pavement.

It was addressed to Gary Sanchez Productions.

This actually happened.

I knew this was Will Ferrell's company.

I went to the address, buzzed them and took it in.

The receptionist was peeved at the courier service, but thrilled that I'd found it. I mentioned that I'd just come from a meeting nearby and would love for someone in-house to see Summerhood. She was happy to take a screener. I wrote Will Ferrell on a Post-it note, and gave it to her.

Will anyone watch it? Can't say. It's rather unlikely.

It was, however, the best parking ticket I ever got.

I've now paid my dues to the film industry, and to the city.

Next stop: Golden Globes. Right?

CHOCOLATE RICE KRISPIES

5 tblsp unsalted butter
3 tblsp butter
1/3 c unsweetened cocoa powder
2 x 10 oz. bags mini marshmallows
10 c crisp rice cereal
1/2 c semisweet mini chocolate chips
Vegetable oil cooking spray

Combine butters and cocoa in large saucepan over medium-high heat. Melt butter, whisking until mixture is well combined. Stir in marshmallows, melting them completely. Remove pan from heat and stir in cereal, working quickly before marshmallow mixture sets. Stir in chocolate chips. Coat hands with cooking spray and shape mixture into walnut-sized balls. Place balls on a baking sheet and let harden for about 1 hour. Store in airtight container in a cool, dry place up to 3 days. Do not refrigerate.

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Getting fit, cheaply and easily

FITNESS CORNER

By FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

Spring is around the corner, and I know that 2009 has turned out to be a stressful year for many of us, but that doesn't mean you have to give up on fitness or on your weight-loss goals.

I've said this before, and I'll probably say it again: getting fit doesn't cost very much, except in time, and it gives you wonderful rewards.

There are many ways you can stay on track inexpensively throughout the year. Just getting up and walking 30 to 40 minutes a day is a great way to start on the road to fitness. It doesn't cost a dime, but man does it make you feel amazing, even in the winter.

If you need something more challenging, try going up and down a flight of stairs non-stop for 20 minutes every day and watch the pounds fly off.

Our community centres run a wide variety of exercise classes. They're another great way to socialize and get fit, and they cost only pennies a class. I have clients who have taken classes at community centres and love them. Hip hop, salsa dance, zumba and yoga classes are only some examples.

If that's not your thing, exercise DVDs are an easy way to get yourself moving for the right amount of time and usually with good intensity. Exercise DVDs are easy to get and range in price from as cheap as $10 to as expensive as $100 for a large box set. You can find just about any style of workout that you're looking for, and you can exercise in your living room or basement.

Some of my clients have turned their private sessions into group sessions of two or more people. It's a great way to get the instruction and attention of a personal trainer, but keep the cost down. It's not only affordable, but fun, too.

However you do it, make exercise and healthy eating a regular part of your life. It will help you lose weight, reduce stress and feel great.

E-mail questions to felycesfitness@rogers.com.

Help out in hard times!

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

These are tough economic times and we need to pull together as a community to lessen the suffering of so many. I know we will.

A short time ago, The CJN reported that more and more Jewish social service organizations are preparing themselves to help out more of our Jewish neighbours – and believe me, regardless of how big their house is, the people suffering might just be the family living next to you.

Recently a Jewish professional told me a heart-rending story of a person who awakens every morning, gets dressed and heads off to work. She said the truth is that this person is out of work, but the person walks the streets pretending to have gainful employment and that all is good.

How terribly sad. This happens more times than we know.

The question, then, is what can we do to help – those of us who are able – in order to alleviate some of the stress being felt by many of our fellow community members, be they retired, near retirement, young families or individuals on their own?

The affluent bear a heavy responsibility in an economy such as the one we're in now. The fact is that the wealthy need to share their personal resources even more now than they do during good times. They know this, and so many of them respond to the call when asked.

As much as we think that it's easy to be rich, it's not always so, and we should never take the well-off for granted. The truth is that the financial burden of getting our community through these tough times is mostly on their shoulders.

Those who are less affluent but still able to give must consider the community as another one of their children. Just as they invest in their progeny's future and ensure that money is put aside for their schooling, so, too, must consideration be made for our community and its needs. Choose an issue – hunger or unemployment, for example – and crunch your numbers so that your tzedakah allotment grows. Although this isn't the reason you should help, your goodness will come back to you.

If you haven't created an endowment fund yet, think about doing so at this time. You can designate your donation and be very specific about how your money is spent. UJA Federation of Greater Toronto has an endowment department that can work with you to create this charitable entity to benefit one of its agencies, or unaffiliated ones. It's the right time to do so. Endow funds for our community's homeless, hungry and families that are suffering.

For those of you who don't have disposable income left at the end of the month, consider how you can give of yourself to those in need. More and more food banks and clothing banks are cropping up everywhere, and with your help, families can have shoes, socks, sweaters and more food to eat. And time spent with those struggling is also a form of giving.

If you think all Jews in Toronto are getting three square meals a day, they're not. These are tough times and we all need to play our part – in a big way – to strengthen our community.

Times when you have no choice mobilize the spirit of courage. – Jewish saying

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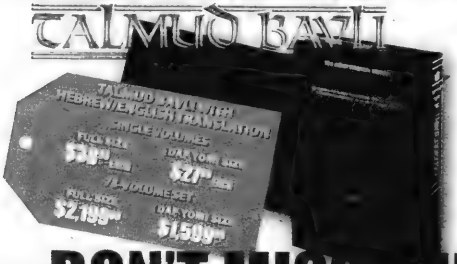

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This Week

National

Jewish students seek action on campus. *Page 3*

Live & Learn

Academic learning is enriched by real-life component. *Section B*

Seniors Scene

Molly Haar, 99, adds a personal touch to archives. *Page 26*

On cjnews.com

A ticket to a faraway land.

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Pro-Israel unionists slam CUPE Ontario

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF and SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporters

Union members sympathetic to Israel are banding together to counter recent moves by the Ontario arm of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and its president, Sid Ryan, to single out the Jewish state via an academic boycott.

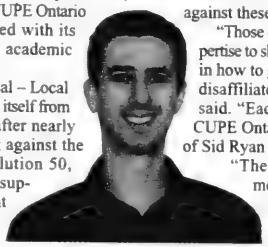
Geoffrey Singer, one of the founders of the new Union Members for Israel (UMI), wants the Jewish community to know that CUPE Ontario's February decision to pass a motion calling for a boycott of Israeli universities does not speak for him or for many others.

Singer, a CUPE member who works for the city of Toronto as an urban planner, said he is one of many Canadian union members who reject the anti-Israel campaigns engaged in by representatives of some Canadian unions.

Last month, the Ontario university workers' co-ordinating committee of CUPE Ontario adopted a motion to proceed with its proposed boycott of Israeli academic institutions.

Singer said his CUPE local – Local 79 – managed to "disaffiliate" itself from CUPE Ontario a year ago after nearly two years of hard lobbying against the provincial chapter's Resolution 50, which passed in 2006 and supported boycotts, divestment and sanctions "to end Israel's apartheid practices."

He said that as a result, members of Local 79 no longer contribute to CUPE Ontario "in any way," and he is encouraging other disaffected union brothers and sisters to follow suit and become proactive in the fight against these union resolutions.



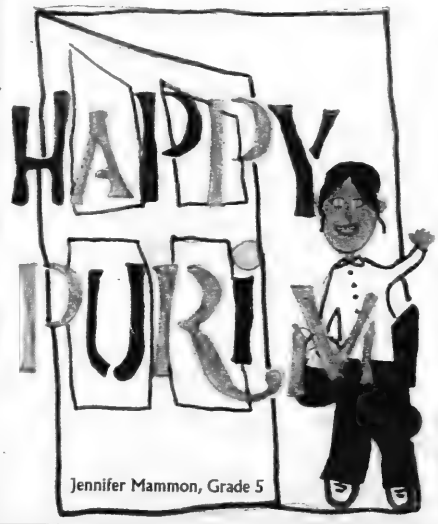
Geoffrey Singer

"Those of us in CUPE Local 79 have expertise to share with members of other locals in how to go about lobbying your local to disaffiliate from CUPE Ontario," Singer said. "Each local that disaffiliates from CUPE Ontario further weakens the ability of Sid Ryan to implement Resolution 50.

"There are a lot of Jewish union members out there who feel very strongly about this issue, but we haven't really had a way before to get in touch with them,

Continued on page 49

Our unshakeable hold on life



Jennifer Mammon, Grade 5

Editorial

It would have been quite understandable, given the circumstances of the harrowing escape from total slaughter and annihilation, if Mordechai and the sages who followed him had established a sombre, reflective holiday to celebrate our rescue.

After all, the profound sense of relief in avoiding the murderers' malevolent scheme lent itself quite naturally, emotionally and psychologically to quiet reflection and thankful recitations of Hallelujah.

But in their wisdom, our sages decreed that we should commemorate Haman's demise with loud, effusive merriment. Hallel would be recited on other holidays, but not Purim.

As U.K. Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks has succinctly observed, "The Megillah turns tragedy into comedy. The banging and clapping at Haman's name teaches us, even as children, to recognize evil but not to fear it. Purim's festivities are the most eloquent testimony I know to the unbreakable spirit of a people who, more than most, have walked through the valley of the shadow of death but kept an unshakeable hold on life."

This year, it seems the holiday comes just in time to help us affirm and reaffirm even more urgently the unshakeability of our Jewish hold on life.

Jews around the world are reeling once again from the putrid smell of anti-Semitism that ominously rises from the dark bogs and soggy marshes of ignorance and bigotry. Israel's fight against Hamas was the latest pretext for the release of noxious anti-Israel and anti-Jew hatred. From the Middle East and Europe to South America and Eurasia, mobs were let loose on the streets, often with the complicity of governments, to shout their hateful slogans, threaten the Jews in their midst, and deface and disfigure Jewish property, places of worship and cemeteries.

Continued on page 8

Shabbat Zachor – Tetzaveh
Candlelighting: 5:55
Havdalah: 7:01

Greater Toronto Area

U.S. pulls out of Durban II conference – see page 37

The News in Brief

Canada

HAMILTON — UJA Federation of Hamilton withdrew from a local Muslim-Jewish dialogue group after a Muslim member published an article about Israel's Gaza operation that many considered "inflammatory and demonizing" of Israel, the federation said. Dialogue member Ali Cheaib, president of the Hamilton chapter of the Canadian Council of Arabs, wrote an opinion piece in the Hamilton Spectator on Jan. 14. Dialogue founder Lorne Finkelstein, who resigned in protest of the article, said Cheaib "violated...fundamental precepts" by "publicly writing about his personal views regarding the Middle East, and especially by the nature of the language used in that article." Cheaib called Hamas "the rape child of a brutal occupier" and Israel "the assassin, the thief, the terrorist." The last dialogue meeting was Jan. 28.

Chabad Pioneer Dies

TORONTO — Rabbi Shlomo Hochler, a founder of Chabad in Ontario and a longtime teacher at Toronto's Eitz Chaim Schools died Feb. 14 at age 88. A graduate of the Lubavitch Yeshiva in Otvosk, Poland, and a Holocaust survivor, Rabbi Hochler was predeceased by his wife Edith in 2006.

Page Leaves Ladies

TORONTO — The Jewish lead singer and co-founder of the Toronto rock band the Barenaked Ladies has left the group "by mutual agreement" to pursue solo projects, the group said last week. Steven Page was charged last July in New York State with drug possession. In October, a court ordered the charges dropped if he stays clean for six months. The band will record a new album next month.

Propaganda Found

TORONTO — Bookmarks advertising Israeli Apartheid Week, a series of anti-Israel lectures and events on campuses worldwide, were found on empty seats of a Toronto Transit Commission subway car last week. The bookmark includes a quote by Ronnie Kasrils, an ex-member of the African National Congress, that "Israeli measures, the brutality, make apartheid look like a picnic." A TTC spokesperson said the bookmarks were placed without permission or knowledge of the TTC. He said such actions should be reported to transit staff.

Ahenakew Acquitted In Hate Case

SASKATOON — A Saskatchewan judge has acquitted former aboriginal leader David Ahenakew of wilfully promoting hatred against Jews.

It was the second trial for Ahenakew, who was found guilty in 2005 of promoting hatred against Jews and fined $1,000. The conviction was overturned on appeal and a new trial was ordered.

Ahenakew, the former head of the Assembly of First Nations, was charged after a controversial speech and subsequent interview with a reporter in 2002 in which he called Jews a "disease.... that's going to take over."

He went on to say: "The Jews damn near owned all of Germany prior to the war. That's how Hitler came in. He was going to make damn sure that the Jews didn't take over Germany or Europe. That's why he fried six million of those guys, you know. Jews would have owned the God-damned world."

On Feb. 23, Judge Wilfred Tucker said the comments were "disgusting," but he acquitted Ahenakew, saying he didn't believe the accused intended to promote hatred.

Ahenakew, 75, testified at his second trial that he doesn't hate Jews, but "I hate what they do to people." He said he still believes Jews caused World War II.

Canadian Jewish Congress and Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center both said they respect the verdict, but B'nai Brith "expressed disappointment" and said it may urge the federal government to review hate laws.

World

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JERUSALEM — In response to the global recession, the Pardes Institute in Jerusalem, along with the MASA student grant program in Israel, is offering students tuition-free study at Pardes for the 2009-10 academic year. The offer is open to students from North America who qualify for a MASA grant, offered by the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency for Israel. Pardes, a non-denominational, co-ed yeshiva, was established in 1972.

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Student leaders demand action on anti-Semitism

Noah Kochman, left, the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students' Israel affairs chair, and Daniel Ferman, Hillel at York's president, held a press conference last Thursday to call attention to the hostility that Jewish students face on Canadian campuses.
[*Sheri Shefa photo*]

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Jewish student groups are calling on university administrations to respond to the rise of anti-Semitic incidents on Canadian campuses by what they describe as "racist thugs who seek to intimidate other students into silence."

Last week, Noah Kochman, the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students' (CFJS) Israel affairs chair, and Daniel Ferman, president of Hillel at York University, held a press conference at the Delta Chelsea Hotel in Toronto to call attention to the hostility and anti-Semitism that Jewish students regularly face on campus.

Although they referred to a number of incidents that have taken place at universities across the country, they singled out York for failing to protect students.

A joint statement by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Hillel at York and Hasbara Fellowships said the Jewish community has been deeply concerned about York's inaction since a mob of anti-Israel protesters barricaded Jewish students in the Hillel lounge while shouting anti-Israel and anti-Semitic slurs on Feb. 11.

"It appears that York is waiting for students to go through the bureaucratic process of filing formal complaints, even though York security was on hand to witness the incident and they have video footage of the incident. The university's non-response is completely unacceptable," said Rafi Yablonsky, president of Hasbara Fellowships.

But Rob Tiffin, York's vice-president of equity, said that the university is actively investigating and wants to "have a resolution of this fairly soon, but it does have to go through a process whereby... there is a fairness applied and a perception of justice."

He said that an adjudicator has footage of the confrontation and has been using it to identify the individuals involved.

"There are also individuals we have identified who are not members of the York community, and we will be taking further legal action on that front," Tiffin said. "Part of the process is for the adjudicator to meet with

Continued on page 14

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Jerusalem think-tank's worries

Last month in Jerusalem, the non-profit think-tank, the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, presented its fifth annual assessment of the worldwide condition of the Jewish people.

Over the years, The CJN has made a point of calling our readers' attention to the institute, its important work and its yearly assessment. Indeed our Rosh Hashanah supplement this year contained a number of essays written by the institute's scholars and its director-general Avinoam Bar-Yosef.

From the editor's desk...

It is hard to imagine a time, ever – except perhaps when Miriam, joyfully playing her timbrel, led the grateful singing after the crossing of the Red Sea, or when chroniclers and visitors marvelled at the monarch's wisdom during the height of King Solomon's reign – when the Jewish future did not seem fraught with worry and concern. Nor is it otherwise today.

"A host of new dangers burden Israel and the Jewish people," stated Arik Puder, the institute's spokesperson when the report was released last month.

Ambassador Dennis Ross, chairman of the board and professional council of the institute, draws some of the parameters of those dangers in the foreword of the assessment: "[The report] addresses the growth of Iranian leverage in the Middle East, the divisions among Palestinians, the prospective American drawdown in Iraq, the uncertainties among Arab regimes — and larger questions related to growing Russian assertiveness, the increased global reach of China and India, and the perception of a relative decline in American power."

The international financial crisis is also discussed in a preliminary manner by the institute.

While the report does not flinch from pointing out and elaborating upon the dangers it sees ahead (in the section on Significant Recent and Current Challenges), it also suggests possibilities and opportunities we face in dealing with those dangers (Policy Directions for World Jewry). In addition, as it does each year, the institute comprehensively explores a specific subject of abiding relevance to world Jewry. This year, that subject is women in Jewish society.

Ross makes it clear that the purpose of the report is to "highlight issues that may become significant for the Jewish world and to trigger planning for how to deal with those emerging factors that could have far-reaching consequences."

The annual assessment does this superbly. It does not purport to be a repository of final wisdom. It is to communal leadership and priority-setting what the shofar is theologically at Rosh Hashanah: a wake-up call.

Thus the writers of the report suggest policy directions that flow from what they define as the Jewish people's strategic agenda. Those policy recommendations are presented according to five broad categories: security and geopolitics; economics and society; education and culture; demographics; and women.

One of the report's more quite timely discussions, especially as Jews on campuses around the world fend off the vile, sinister encroachments of "Israel Apartheid Week," relates to education.

"The quality of Jewish education – in Israel and abroad – is of growing concern to those who worry that ignorance about basic history, culture and tradition has a corrosive effect on Jewish identity and, ultimately, threatens the survival of the Jewish people. Conflicts between religious and secular Jews, with respect to education as well as other societal functions, continue to pose daunting challenges primarily but not exclusively in Israel. A serious problem is the image of Israel and Zionism on college and university campuses, mostly in Europe, but also notably in elite institutions of the U.S., many of which have become hotbeds of a virulent new strain of anti-Semitism that poisons the academic atmosphere, infects teaching and learning, threatens the legitimacy of the Jewish state and discourages capable individuals who are committed to their Jewish identity from pursuing academic careers. *Our basic policy recommendation in response to these trends in education and culture is for Jewish leadership worldwide to devote resources toward educational research, evaluation, international exchange and institutional innovation.*" (Their emphasis)

One of the more intriguing and potentially far-reaching suggestions the writers make as part of their policy directions in the field of education is that the government of Israel explore ways of lowering the cost of Jewish education in the Diaspora.

The assessment is a treasure-trove of important, relevant and highly informative material. It should be read with the seriousness and the urgency that its authors intend.

As we have done in previous years, we have reproduced (below) the thumbnail demographic sketch of the Jewish people that appears in the executive summary of the report titled Selected Indicators of World Jewry – 2008. Due to limitations of space, we have omitted the references that explain the footnotes in the chart. The information, however, is quite straightforward.

Among the noteworthy nuggets of information on the page are:

• The Jews of Israel, the U.S., and Canada comprise 84 per cent of the 13,232,000 Jews in the world.

• Canadian Jews comprise 2.8 per cent of the totality of world Jewry.

The executive summary of the report, along with other publications of the institute, is available at the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute website, www.jpppi.org.il.

– *MBD*

Country	Jewish Population (Core Definition)			Index of Human Development		GDP per capita (PPP U.S. $)	Jewish Day-school Attendance Rate (%)	Recent Out-marriage Rate (%)	Ever Visited Israel (% of Jew. Pop.)	Aliyah	Tourists to Israel
	1970[a]	2008[a]	Projected 2020[a]	Value 2005[a]	World Rank 2005[a]	2006[a]	Most recent[a]	Most recent[a]	Most recent[a]	2007[a]	2007[a]
World	12,633,000	13,232,000	13,827,000	.968–.336	1–177	60,228–567				18,129[g]	2,267,900[i]
Israel	2,582,000	5,478,000	6,453,000[c]	.927	23	25,864	97	5	100	..	..
North America	5,686,000	5,650,000	5,581,000	.961–.951	4–12	41,890–33,375				2,278	600,900
United States	5,400,000	5,275,000	5,200,000[c]	.951	12	41,890	25[h]	54	>35	2,094	541,600
Canada	286,000	375,000	381,000	.961	4	33,375	55	35	>65	189	59,300
Latin America	514,000	392,000	364,000	.892–.529	31–146	17,297–1,663				1,522	82,400
Argentina	282,000	183,000	162,000[c]	.869	38	14,280	50–55	45	>50	319	15,200
Brazil	90,000	96,000	90,000[c]	.800	70	8,402	71	45	>50	261	20,400
Mexico	35,000	40,000	42,000	.829	52	10,751	85	10	>70	52	18,400
Other countries	107,000	73,000	70,000[c]	.892–.529	31–146	17,297–1,663	75	15–95	>50	890	28,400
Europe non-FSU	1,331,000	1,153,000	1,070,000	.968–.775	1–84	60,228–5,316				3,637	1,034,700
France	530,000	488,000	482,000	.952	10	30,386	40	40–45	>70	2,335	246,000
United Kingdom	390,000	294,000	278,000[c]	.946	16	33,238	60	40–45	>75	562	171,900
Germany	30,000	120,000	108,000[c]	.935	22	29,481	<20	>60	>50	96	101,100
Hungary	70,000	49,000	34,000	.874	36	17,887	<15	60	..	49	10,600
Other EU	171,000	150,000	134,000	.959–.863	4–42	60,228–15,871	10–25	33–75	>50	315	422,000
Other non-EU[b]	140,000	52,000	34,000	.968–.775	1–84	41,420–5,316	5–20	50–80	..	280	83,100
FSU	2,151,000	348,000	173,000	.862–.673	43–122	15,478–1,356				6,502	322,600
Russia	808,000	215,000	130,000[c]	.802	67	10,845	<15	80	..	3,249	193,400
Ukraine	777,000	76,000	25,000[c]	.788	76	6,848	<15	80	..	1,450	75,100
Rest FSU Europe[f]	312,000	37,000	15,000[c]	.862–.708	43–111	15,478–2,100	<15	65–75	..	618	33,100
FSU Asia	254,000	20,000	3,000	.794–.673	73–122	7,857–1,356	<15	50–75	..	1,185	21,000
Asia (rest)[e]	104,000	19,000	21,000	.953–.508	8–153	31,267–930				282	130,100
Africa	195,000	77,000	60,000	.843–.336	50–177	16,106–667				3,795	72,500
South Africa	118,000	71,000	57,000[c]	.674	121	11,110	85	20	>75	137	19,300
Oceania	70,000	115,000	105,000	.962–.762	3–92	31,794–2,563				89	24,700
Australia	65,000	107,000	97,000[c]	.962	3	31,794	65	22	>65	80	21,600

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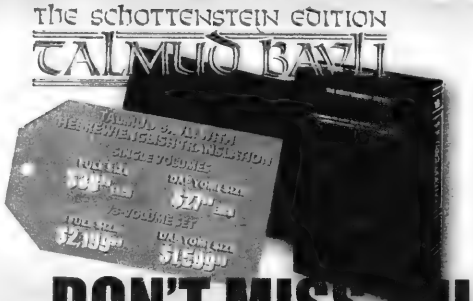

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Federation funding won't change this year, CEO says

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The results of a series of high-level closed-door meetings in Florida early last month in which leaders of the Jewish federation system discussed streamlining operations, among other issues, will have no impact locally, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto president and CEO Ted Sokolsky told The CJN last week.

Ted Sokolsky

Canadian federations are part of the North American federation umbrella United Jewish Communities (UJC), but they're not involved in its overseas allocations program, Sokolsky explained.

Sokolsky – a former head of UJC's large city executive directors and a member of a number of its strategic planning committees – attended the Florida meetings, where one issue that came to the fore was allocation of overseas funding.

Most Jewish federations that are part of UJC give a predetermined figure to the organization for it to divide between the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) for their respective core operating budgets. There are also some supplementary overseas allocations.

In Canada, federation funding for JAFI and JDC has been funnelled through UJA Federations Canada for more than 40 years, Sokolsky said.

Even in the United States, he added, "the real story is that nothing has changed. What has changed is putting down a practice on paper that has existed for 20 years."

This year, Jewish communities in Canada are contributing a total of $15 million to JAFI and $1 million to the JDC, the same amount as last year. About half of that comes from Toronto.

Even if the Toronto campaign doesn't reach its anticipated goal of $66 million, of which $61 million had been raised by the close of the campaign last month – and without cutting the amount of overseas allocations – local services won't be affected, at least for the 2009-10 year, Sokolsky said.

Local campaign organizers were unable to meet their original goal of $70 million, which was set before the economy declined, but they were confident at the time the campaign closed that they would match last year's total of $66 million.

Although the annual budget process is not expected to be finalized until late May or early June, the federation has "made some internal changes and [may delay] certain programs, in case we fall short," Sokolsky said.

"We just have to cut back where we can," he said. "I think all businesses are cutting back." He added that some open staff positions have gone unfilled as part of the effort to "cushion the effect" of the economic downturn.

Sokolsky said he considers the Toronto federation lucky, because its fundraising campaign was mostly completed "before things got very bad."

With files from JTA

STUDENT TEACHERS: Student teachers from Israel – from left Inbar, Shirly, Naama and Nataly, are pictured with Netivot HaTorah Day School's art teacher, Rochelle Diamond, centre, with decorations in the halls for Rosh Chodesh Adar, which depicted a series of popular board games. [Rebecca Ansel photo]

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'White guilt' helps Islamists, moderate Muslims say

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Two prominent Muslim personalities, both of them immigrants from east Asia, share a deep concern over the state of Canadian freedoms and values – a concern they say eclipses that of homegrown opinion-makers.

In their view, the liberal and left-leaning Canadian intelligentsia is wracked by guilt and contempt for their own intellectual heritage and they do all they can to stand up for radical Islamists whose agendas are more closely linked to the Muslim Brotherhood than to Canadian freedoms.

They, on other hand, the "good-looking" Muslims whom the mainstream media generally ignore, stand with John Stuart Mill in upholding individual freedom and traditional values associated with an earlier Canada.

So spoke Tarek Fatah and Salim Mansur at a recent lunchtime lecture at the offices of the Ontario Bar Association, sponsored by the Speakers Action Group and the Canadian Jewish Civil Rights Association, and in interviews with The CJN.

Fatah is founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress and author of Chasing a Mirage: The Tragic Illusion of an Islamic State. Mansur is a professor of political science at the University of Western Ontario and a syndicated columnist.

Fatah contrasted the influence of "good looking" Muslims like himself – by which he meant those who share Enlightenment values and have integrated into Canadian society – to "ugly" Muslims who dress as in Saudi Arabia, speak with heavy accents, promote jihad and claim to be authentic representatives of their faith. Canadian politicians fall all over themselves to curry favour with the latter group, giving them prestige and influence.

Meanwhile, "nine-to-five" Muslims, who are mostly concerned with making a living and getting ahead, are cowed into silence by the authority granted by Canadian officials to these traditional Muslim representatives, he said.

Fatah and Mansur also blasted comfortable Canadians who fail to stand up for traditional values and confront jihadists among them. Canadians' freedoms stem from the Enlightenment, the American and French Revolutions, and the concept that citizens of a country are governed equally by man-made laws, Fatah said. Other societies were formed around inherited racial or religious commonalities, but those belong in the past. Yet, even today, some people choose to live in the 12th century and not in the 21st, he said.

In Canada today you can find books distributed at street fairs supported by PEN Canada, an advocacy organization for free expression, that advocate jihad, he said.

Muslims like himself argue that it's nonsense to accept the premise that women should be able to testify in court while their faces are covered by burkas, yet women's groups rush to the defence of these women, he said.

He also took aim at mainstream Jewish organizations, saying Canadian Jewish Congress and B'nai Brith Canada are too eager to foster relations with more traditional Muslim groups and ignore Muslims who prize Canadian values.

In an interview with The CJN, Fatah said "there is a tremendous amount of white guilt. The intelligentsia in this country in a selfish way tries to assuage this guilt. It caters to the most idiosyncratic behaviour of the immigrant and practices the racism of lower expectations. It sets standards of behaviour for our community, but when dealing with immigrants and especially the Muslim community, it does not expect them to live by the same standards."

He said mosques treat women as second-class citizens – something that would not be tolerated in the broader society – yet still retain charitable status. That's not something that other Canadians should be subsidizing through tax policy, he said.

Fatah said Saudi Arabia is financing Islamic groups in North America, including in the GTA, who preach "hatred of Western society" and promote jihad.

"Jews are right at the top of the jihad victims," he continued. "You can be blamed for everything that goes wrong in the Islamic world. The occupation is the biggest gift to radical Islam. The State of Israel is the gift to Islamists that keeps on giving. Palestinians' pain is used by the Islamists' agenda."

Asked about human rights commissions – several provincial and federal commissions were recently asked to look into complaints about written material that allegedly promoted contempt of Muslims – Fatah called them "a joke, a scandal."

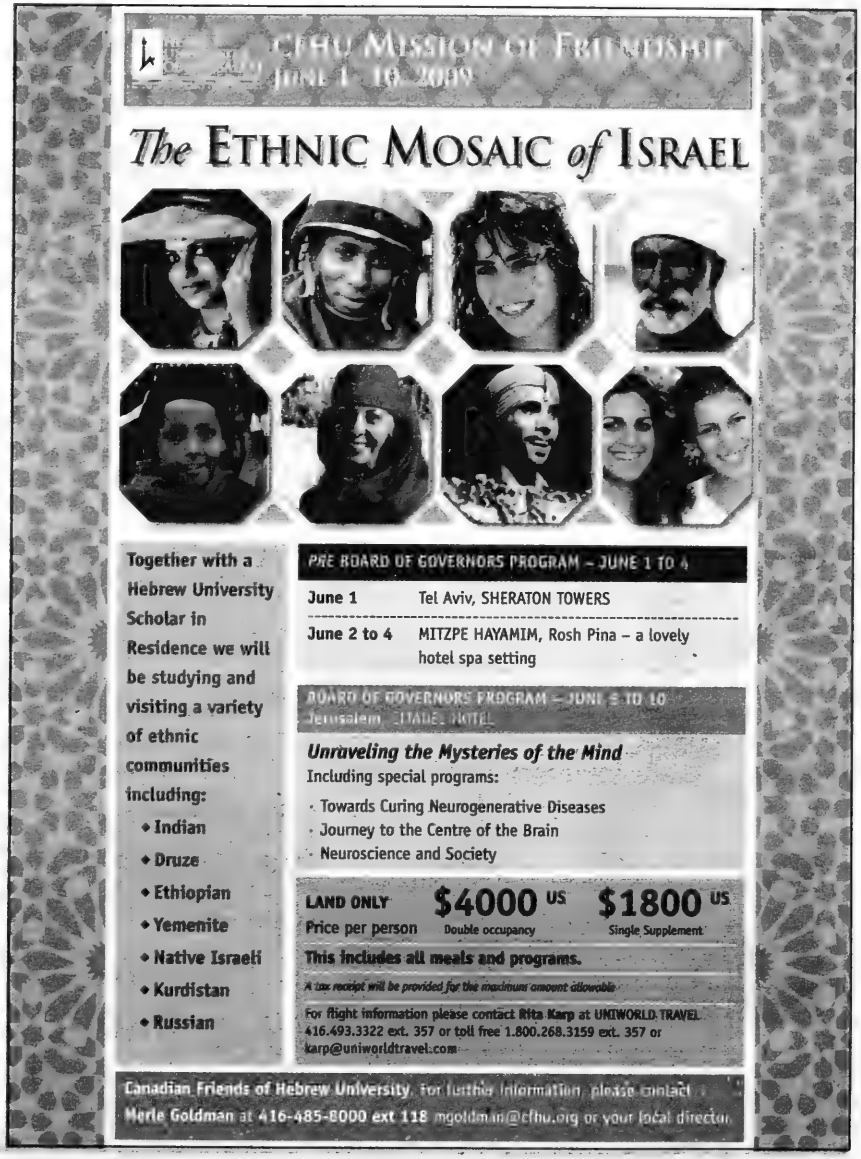
Commissioners are political appointees and one senior person at the Ontario Human Rights Commission "is openly supportive of the Islamist cause and believes in Shariah law," he said.

In a question-and-answer period, Fatah was asked why moderate Muslims don't demonstrate against their radical co-religionists. Turning the question around, he asked why mainstream Canadians don't demonstrate against the Taliban. Why would such demonstrations be expected of Muslim immigrants who are trying to make a living and who escaped tyranny?

Mansur added: Would an Algerian, who escaped from a country where hundreds of thousands were killed by religious extremists protest against the leadership of a mosque that was controlled by those very factions from Algeria and risk the lives of their families in Algeria?

Mansur said Canadians may now be pushing back against the erosion of traditional values. You can see it in New Brunswick, where parents were angry that a school principal banned playing O Canada at the start of the day. (That policy was reversed).

You see it also in Quebec where people are "more assertive" in demanding that their values be retained, he said.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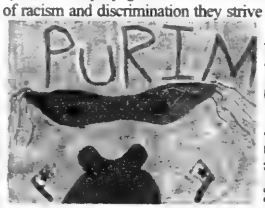
Quintessential holiday of responsibility

Continued from page 1

Closer to home, the monstrous lie of "Israeli Apartheid" is the drumbeating buzzword this week on campuses around North America, rocking the minds and spoiling the hearts of the ill-informed and meek of character.

The story of Purim and the merriment it prescribes teach us, among many important lessons, that we do not bow down or bend our knees to the tyrants who propagate hateful anti-Jewish lies or to the tyranny of racism and discrimination they strive to create.



Marli Cohen, Grade 4

The holiday teaches us to unite against external enemies, to join forces one with the other, to set aside differences, to have courage, to have faith and to resist.

Purim is the quintessential holiday of responsibility. As Mordechai reminded Esther, in the dreaded moments of crisis, we cannot, we must not, run from our personal responsibility to act. Neither station in life nor paucity of spirit absolves the individual from being responsible or from taking responsibility for each other.

Thus, Mordechai and the sages also decreed that the celebration of the holiday requires that we give *matanot l'evyonim*, monetary aid to the poor and needy among us.

We cannot celebrate fully, truly, in the intended manner if there are among us those who have not the means to do so. The entirety of the community was rescued; the entirety of the community must feel the requisite sense of celebration. This, too, is part of what Rabbi Sacks referred to as our "unshakeable hold on life." It is the core value that inspires the ethics of our social responsibility: the dignity of our friend and neighbour is as precious to us as is our own. And this year, more than ever in recent times, the holiday of Purim helps us affirm the unshakeability of that value, too.

The economic uncertainty of these times has harmed individuals, families and institutions. It falls to all of us to help those who are in financial need as much as we can, and, if we can, even more than we have in the past.

Ours is a religion of responsibility. It reminds us at every turn of the calendar that we do not live alone, that we are here on earth for the sake of each other.

Thankfully, however, our responsibilities also include the responsibility to be happy, to celebrate.

So let's celebrate.

25 years ago in The CJN

Lebanese president Amin Gamayel cancelled a troop withdrawal treaty with Israel after Palestinian forces attacked the Jewish state and Israel retaliated. It was hoped that the treaty would have been a first step to peace and the normalization of relations between Lebanon and Israel.

Editorials & Letters

Dry Bones HAVE A HAPPY!
PURIM IS WHEN WE ARE SUPPOSED TO MOCK AND RIDICULE . . .
AND LAUGH AT THE WORLD AND THE DANGERS WE FACE!
WHICH IS WHY WE DO IT WHILE "TIPSY" AND IN DISGUISE!
HAPPY PURIM!
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Not all union locals support Ryan

Sara Horowitz's column "Why unions don't like Israel" (CJN, Jan. 29) is, I'm happy to report, decidedly incomplete.

It is true that the leadership of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Local 3903, contract lecturers and teaching assistants at York University, is pathologically opposed to Israel. The leader of the Ontario section, Sid Ryan, holds to a similar aberration.

But this is decidedly not true of the rest of Canada's labour movement. For example, the equivalent Local 3902 of CUPE at the University of Toronto supports a fair and balanced call for peace in the Middle East. They are very worthy of the support of the Jewish community.

I'm a Toronto high school teacher, and thus I have many friends and colleagues who are CUPE members. Their opinions of Ryan vary from disagreement to abhorrence.

If any part of the labour movement is ostensibly opposed to Israel, it's only due to apathy and laziness of their Jewish members.

As a hopeful example, my local Toronto Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, District 12, Secondary Teachers' Bargaining Unit, overwhelmingly defeated a proposed motion to boycott Israel. After a full debate, led by several active Jewish teachers, the boycott motion went down by a margin of 100 to 10, as was reported in The CJN in January 2007.

Similar results can be expected in any local, provincial or national union if Jewish members remember our heritage from Hillel and the Maccabees. Be involved, raise our issues and fight for what is right.

After a full and lengthy debate, you'll succeed, because Canada's unions are democratic institutions and most Canadians are decent people.

David Orenstein
Toronto

* * *

Amnesia in the Mideast

Jesse Mintz is critical of the historical amnesia that afflicts both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ("Amnesia abounds, on all sides," CJN, Feb. 19) However, his own narrative of historical and moral relativity suffers from a more severe amnesia that makes his apparent impartiality delusive. If the clock of history is not to be set arbitrarily, our memory must stretch further back than the mere 60 years that have passed since the founding of the modern State of Israel. Before the Palestinians, the British and the Turks; before there were Muslims or Christians; before Rome and Babylon ruled; the Jewish people dwelled in their land, and their presence there never died out. Let us therefore set our clock back to the time of Abraham, when a divine promise was made. Let us see the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the light that radiates from the ultimate origin.

Howard Damie
Montreal

* * *

Jewish singles

Letter writer Charles Abshez laments the lack of opportunities that the Conservative movement provides for its singles to meet ("Conservative Jewish singles," CJN letters, Jan. 8). He suggests that it copy Sasson V'Simcha, which has been established by the Orthodox as a not-for-profit shidduch organization for their singles. While Sasson V'Simcha is endorsed by all Orthodox rebbetzins, they do not run it. It is run by volunteers and professional shadchanim.

We recognize the need for such a service in the entire Jewish community and would be happy to help others set up their own shidduch group. Please feel free to telephone us at 416-256-4497 or e-mail us at sassontoronto@rogers.com if we can be of any assistance.

Rebbetzin Jenni Ochs
Chavi Jacobs
Co-presidents, Sasson V'Simcha

* * *

Seeking Latvian Jews

Shamir is a small Jewish community organization in Latvia that, among other things, is commemorating Latvian Jewry. We are gathering information about Jews connected to Latvia for a Latvian Jewish Encyclopedia. We currently have more than 1,500 entries for the encyclopedia, half of the proposed number.

We are asking Jews from Latvia or their descendants to contact us, so that information about them or their ancestors can be included in the encyclopedia. Biographies and photos are welcome.

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From the private life of Ehud Olmert...

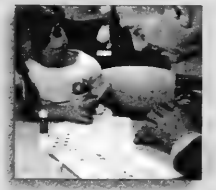
So, Tzipi, tell me. What was it like when you met him?

It was amazing, Ehud. Oh my Gawd.

When Barack looked at me I almost melted.

HAPPY PURIM!

One more time, Ehud, try to keep within the lines.



Okay, Mr. Prime Minister. What is it that you don't get about this?

Ehud, this is how it works. You push this button and say "hello."

Ehud, we have a gift for you.

George, I love gifts. Thank you. I'm so excited.

Whoaaa baby.

Ehud. Ehud. It's supposed to be coffee. "Wake up and smell the coffee." Not the lemon.

Oy. Then my face got caught in the subway door. It was so embarrassing.

Hosni. Hosni. Please. I'm looking for Bashir Assad. Have you seen him?

So, Condi. Did you see my picture in The CJN last week?

I'm happy to read your palm Ehud. I see a lot of vacation time ahead for you.

[Israel and Israel Sun photos]

Hamilton dialogue collapses

During the recent war in Gaza, one of the founding partners to the so-called Hamilton Jewish Arab Muslim Dialogue was ominously unrestrained in castigating Israel (Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 14). Defending Hamas as "the rape child of a brutal occupier," he also referred to Israel as "the assassin, the thief, the terrorist."

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

He ranted that Israel was "responsible for 60 years of land and property confiscation, and of uprooting an entire population from their natural environment" and that "Israel has no moral standing whatsoever to portray itself as the victim, or even trumpet the usual refrain about defending itself against Palestinian terror."

In the light of this very obvious violation of a "code" whereby all members of the dialogue committee had agreed "to avoid debate on the Mideast conflict and refrain from comments or actions that could be perceived to be critical of the group or their interests," UJA Federation of Hamilton summarily terminated its participation in the dialogue initiative. Given the circumstances, federation leaders had little option but to withdraw. However, what is more to the point is why they chose to engage in this charade in the first place.

From the outset, there were countless warning signs that the dialogue, as constituted, could not, and would not, work. This latest breach of its guiding principles was one among many. And while arguably the most blatant, it differed little in tone and intent from previous acts of bad faith by dialogue partners who have sought to demonize the State of Israel and its supporters.

With each offence there was a rationalization and a pledge to immediately re-commit to the same dialogue framework. Meanwhile members of the Jewish community who drew attention to the inherent risks of what was occurring were marginalized, labelled as "detractors." Even after the dismantling of the dialogue committee, an article in last month's Hamilton Jewish News proclaimed that the federation's "involvement with the [dialogue] committee has been a valuable experience." Notably absent was any hint of acceptance that the process may have been misguided, the objectives flawed and the outcome embarrassing.

An effective dialogue requires mutual respect and mutual recognition among all participants. When such components are lacking, there's no point to continuing the deliberations.

With each contravention of the dialogue committee's own rules of engagement, there was ample opportunity for the local federation to pull out of the failing experiment. In choosing not to do so, our leadership has been tainted by what has turned out to be no more than a cynical public relations exercise that has fomented distrust, divided our community and made a mockery of civil discourse.

Bibi and Livni must set aside egos for unity

By the time this is printed, a coalition government might have been formed here in Israel. Somehow I doubt it.

When the election results became clear in the early hours of Feb. 11, it also became evident they were anomalous. The centrist Kadima party, headed by Tzipi Livni, won the most Knesset seats (28 out of 120), but a right-wing bloc of six parties, led by Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud, won a 65-seat plurality.

Yair Lapostiten in Jerusalem

Under Israel's constitutional system, after conferring with all factions elected to the Knesset, the president must call on an MK to form a government. Traditionally, the largest party's leader has been given the task. However, when it became apparent that Livni wouldn't be able to do so, President Shimon Peres gave Netanyahu the nod.

Legally, Netanyahu has 28 days to try, with Peres authorized to lengthen that period by 14 days. With the myriad issues to be dealt with, Netanyahu must act quickly and effectively to create a viable government.

He could piece together a coalition with little delay based on Likud and its "natural allies" on the right – two haredi parties (Shas and Yahadut HaTorah), a nationalist religious party (the Jewish Home), and two ultra-nationalist parties (National Union and Israel Beytenu).

The last, Avigdor Lieberman's Israel Beytenu, is now the third-largest faction in the Knesset, its success based on nationalistic fervour in the wake of the recent Gaza operation (and the party's call to annul "disloyal" Arab Israelis' citizenship), and huge support from Russian new immigrants.

While this "natural alliance" might function in relative unison when dealing with security-related issues and demands on Israel to make concessions for peace, it will be hard-pressed if Lieberman lives up to his campaign promises to promote legalized civil marriages and easier conversion procedures. These initiatives won't sit well with the religious elements in this possible coalition, and it won't be long before it begins to teeter.

Understanding the limits of his success and grounded in his own experience, Netanyahu is bent on forming a wider coalition. During his previous stint as prime minister in 1996, he managed to hold power for only three years, due to his government's slim plurality and constant infighting within it, and particularly within his own party.

With this backdrop, Netanyahu has invited Kadima and Ehud Barak's debilitated Labor Party to join him in a national unity government. While such governments have been criticized for serving the lowest common denominator and leading to stagnation, there have been several successful precedents for such administrations. Menachem Begin joined Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir in governments that functioned well from just before the Six Day War in 1967 until nearly the end of the War of Attrition in 1969. Peres and Yitzchak Shamir governed satisfactorily for four years in the mid 1980s, each serving as prime minister for two years.

Given its abysmal election results, the chances of Labor joining any coalition are slim. To do so would be political suicide. It needs time in opposition to regroup and renew its voice.

Kadima might be a different story. Netanyahu has offered it two of the most important ministerial positions. Livni, who views herself as the election's true victor, has to date rejected Netanyahu's overtures, claiming his government will be far too hawkish and refusing to become a mask for its policies. She might reluctantly consider a prime ministerial rotation between Netanyahu and herself, similar to Shamir and Peres, which would allay suspicions about Netanyahu's true ambitions. For now, however, the party's line is that it prefers consolidating power while in opposition.

Not having attained pre-election goals, neither of the major parties can achieve all their aspirations.

The matters at hand demand political maturity and magnanimity – Gaza and Hamas, Gilad Schalit's release, a nuclear Iran, the economy and the need for election reforms, to name but a few. While a national unity government is not a solution to all our woes, it's what this country needs and is also what an overwhelming majority of the people want.

Whether through prime ministerial rotation or some other political formula, Netanyahu and Livni must put their egos aside and responsibly forge a sustainable united government.

Israel-bashing Jews: not in my name!

Israel's response to thousands of rocket attacks from Gaza brought another wave of vituperous attacks, with more false claims of "war crimes," human rights violations and other spurious allegations of immorality. The Durban strategy of demonization is moving at top speed, with trade union boycotts, university "apartheid weeks," and legal campaigns to bring Israeli officials to trial in kangaroo courts. In parallel, demonstrators chant slogans in support of Hamas and Hezbollah, which openly proclaim their genocidal goals.

Gerald Steinberg in Jerusalem

In this rejectionist war that has continued for more than 60 years, a tiny group of anti-Zionist Jews and Israelis play central roles. They are given prominence as columnists and on television, claiming to present an "enlightened" and "independent" Jewish voice that's opposed to the evil "occupation" (erasing a history of genocidal goals and terrorism that began long before 1967) and other terrible Israeli actions. The group includes university professors, journalists and officials of human rights superpowers. Many have giant psychological chips on their shoulders and gain notoriety by being vocally anti-Israel.

These "independent voices" do not speak in my name. With the restoration of Jewish sovereignty, Israelis choose their own leaders, for better or worse, and engage in active policy debates. The age of Diaspora interlocutors and apologists selected by foreign powers is over.

The small number of "independent Jewish voices" speak for themselves and constitute a tiny fraction of the Jewish people. But in an atmosphere of anti-Semitism, they provide imagined shields against claims of anti-Semitism and justify the singling out of Israel. In many cases, this is their only "Jewish" activity – most are not active members in synagogues, play no role in other Jewish institutions and do not contribute to Jewish life or continuity.

A prominent example of this activity is provided by Antony Lerman, who briefly served as director of London's Institute for Jewish Policy Research, and now has a column in the influential Guardian newspaper – one of the leading platforms for the anti-Israel invective pervasive among leftist intellectuals in Britain.

On Feb. 13, in "An open letter on anti-Semitism," addressed to an official addressing a major conference on the topic taking place in the British Parliament. Assuming the ostrich position, Lerman wrote that the way to stop numerous anti-Semitic attacks in Britain was to be louder in criticizing Israel. Lerman also alleges that the anti-Israel obsession in which he participates is not a form of modern anti-Semitism – replacing all of the evidence with sentiment from his fantasy world. He also refers to concerns about this anti-Semitism as "exaggeration" and "hyperbole."

The main reason that Lerman's opinions receive any attention is that he is a prominent Jew and, therefore, useful in the demonization campaign. Lerman has been embraced by J-Street – a U.S.-based organization funded and founded by George Soros – another anti-Israel Diaspora-based "independent" Jewish voice.

Canada's "independent Jewish voices" are less articulate or influential than Lerman or Soros, and no more credible. In a letter to Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney, who is a world leader in the battle against anti-Semitism, this group sought to justify the activities of the Canadian Arab Federation, claiming that this controversial organization "has been a consistent and valued supporter of Canadian Jewish individuals and groups, including Independent Jewish Voices (Canada)." This is transparently self-serving propaganda, and nothing more.

Free speech gives all voices – including the most marginal – the right to state their opinions, but in the free marketplace of ideas, the unjustified attention and vacuous claims can be exposed and countered. Jews can always be found for those seeking to justify "wiping Israel off the map," but they do not speak in my name.

The Kirshner File

Islamic revolution turned Iran into Israel's enemy

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Last month, as Iran marked the 30th anniversary of the Islamic revolution, Khaled Meshal, one of the leaders of Hamas, visited Tehran, one of his favourite destinations. He was there to thank the Iranian government for having helped Hamas during Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip.

"Iran has definitely played a big role in the victory of the people of Gaza and is a partner in that victory," Meshal told Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a vocal backer of radical Palestinian factions and a fierce and unremitting opponent of Israel's existence. "The people of Gaza have always appreciated the political and spiritual support of the Iranian leaders and nation."

Meshal's reference to Hamas' victory was overblown, of course. Militarily, Israel's armed forces trounced Hamas during its 22-day offensive, known as Operation Cast Lead. But Meshal – the object of an Israeli assassination attempt in 1997 in Jordan – was not exaggerating when he referred to Hamas' alliance with Iran in glowing terms.

As the air and land war in Gaza unfolded in December and January, Iran encouraged Hamas to hang on, urged young Iranian men to volunteer for Hamas, and warned Hamas not to accept a ceasefire with Israel. Later, as Israel escalated its attacks, two Iranian emissaries – Ali Lafijani, the speaker of Iran's parliament, and Said Jalili, a senior representative of Iran's intelligence service – conferred with Meshal.

Amid these developments, Ahmadinejad called on U.S. President Barack Obama to cease American support for Israel, claiming that Israel's days were numbered. Only months earlier, in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly, Ahmadinejad, a Holocaust denier, claimed that "the Zionist regime is on the slope of decline," and that "Zionists" dominated financial and political capitals in Europe and the United States.

Before hostilities in Gaza erupted, Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, castigated Egypt and Saudi Arabia for not ending Israel's blockade of Gaza.

Iran's embrace of Hamas was not merely rhetorical. Prior to Operation Cast Lead, Iran, a big oil producer, supplied Hamas with generous subsidies, caches of arms and munitions, logistical assistance and training for its fighters.

During the war, Israel targeted Iranian-affiliated targets, destroying a special Hamas unit consisting of 100 men who had been trained by Iran's Revolutionary Guards, striking a building housing Al-Alam, Iran's Arab-language television station in Gaza, and arresting two Palestinian journalists working for Al-Alam.

As well, the Israeli navy intercepted an Iranian ship carrying humanitarian aid, food and medicine for the Palestinians of Gaza, while U.S. and Greek naval vessels stopped two Iranian boats bound for Gaza. Both ships were believed to be ferrying weapons and weapon parts to Hamas.

Since the 1979 Islamic revolution, Iran has gone to extraordinary lengths to champion the rejectionist Palestinian cause and decry Israel's existence. The revolution was a major strategic blow to Israel and the United States, ushering in a repressive era of theocratic rule in Iran.

Israel, threatened by hostile Arab states, established relations with Tehran as part of David Ben-Gurion's "periphery" policy of cementing alliances with key non-Arab countries in the region, Iran, Turkey and Ethiopia.

Israel established a mutually beneficial and supremely pragmatic relationship with the pro-western king of Iran, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. Iran became one of Israel's closest Muslim allies, even as Iran rescinded its recognition of Israel in 1951, harshly criticized Israel's settlement policies in the post-1967 territories and voted for a United Nations resolution equating Zionism with racism.

But with the overthrow of the monarchy, Iran cut ties with Israel, notwithstanding the fact that Israel sold about $2 billion (US) worth of military equipment to Iran during its draining eight-year war with Iraq.

Iran's new rulers, the mullahs and their religious and nationalist supporters, hated Israel, viewing it as an illegitimate state and a beachhead of western colonialism.

Iran's first supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, described Israel as an "enemy of Islam." His equally zealous successor, Ayatollah Khamenei, said of Israel, "This cancerous tumor of a state must be removed from the region." Even an alleged moderate such as Mohammed Khatami, the president from 1997 to 2005, branded Israel an "illegal state" and a "parasite."

By sharp contrast, the new Iranian regime rallied around the Palestinian cause, handing over Israel's embassy to the leader of the PLO, Yasser Arafat. Today, Iran's backing of the Palestinians is confined to its extreme wing, as exemplified by Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

But as much as this concerns the Israeli government, Israel is far more worried about Iran's budding nuclear program, which was originally launched by the Shah.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
[RNS Reuters photo]

Iran's nuclear project, which Iran insists is peaceful in intention, has made significant strides. Yet no one is certain when Iran will actually be able to build a functioning atomic device. The director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohammed El Baradei, has said that Iran may be able to build a nuclear arsenal by 2011.

Iran has apparently completed two of the vital steps toward joining the nuclear club, of which Israel is a member.

Iran has converted uranium ore into yellowcake and transformed the yellowcake into pure hexafluoride UF6 fuel. The challenge facing Iran now is enrichment, feeding the UF6 fuel into clusters of high-speed centrifuges, or cascades. According to a report issued recently by the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran has built 5,600 centrifuges. This has enabled Iran to make 2,227 pounds of low-enriched uranium, enough for a single atomic bomb. More ominously, Iran has made progress in fitting a nuclear warhead to a missile.

Iran has also tested long-range missiles that can reach Israel, and last month, Iran successfully launched its first domestically manufactured satellite, the Omid, into orbit. Ehud Barak, Israel's defence minister, called the Omid a "technological feat" and proof of Iran's "intelligence and military capabilities." Iran claims that the Omid will be used strictly for civilian purposes, but the ballistic technology can be deployed for launching warheads, too.

Given Tehran's hostility to Israel, its alliances with Israel's enemies and its Holocaust denial, Israel regards Iran's nuclear program as a threat that must be countered by either economic sanctions or military means. Shaul Mofaz, Israel's former defence minister, has said that Israel would be prepared to take "unilateral military action" to wipe out Iran's nuclear facilities.

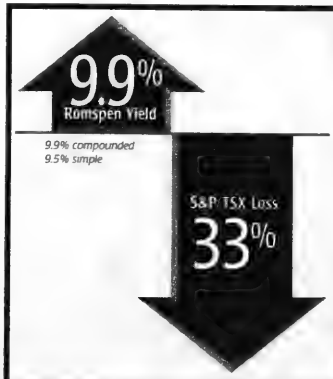
But the former commander of U.S. army operations in the Middle East, John Abizaid, doubts whether Israel has the capabilities to inflict serious damage on Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

Thinking of mounting such an attack, Israel asked the United States for advanced bunker-busting bombs in 2008. Washington not only rejected Israel's request, but turned down a parallel Israeli request to fly over Iraq to reach nuclear sites in Iran. To Israel's satisfaction, Russia has reportedly frozen the sale of S-300 anti-aircraft missiles to Iran, a state-of-the-art system that can track 100 targets all at once.

For Israel, the burning question is whether Iran can be stopped in its tracks. Maybe not, as NATO's secretary-general, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, suggested last year. "I am not positive about the world being able to stop Iran from fulfilling its ambitions," he said in a bleak statement.

Tighter economic sanctions may be useful in diverting Iran from its course, but Russia and China oppose such drastic measures. Future U.S. talks with Iran may nudge Iran to reconsider its policy.

Absent these scenarios, Israel may have to learn to live with an Iranian nuclear arsenal. Call it mutual deterrence.



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Norene Gilletz prepares to add salt to her mock chopped liver. [Frances Kraft photo]

Mazon fundraiser to help feed the hungry

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Mazon Canada raised close to $100,000 at its annual benefit event, held this year at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue on Feb. 18.

The money is allocated to the organization's general funds for front-line hunger relief organizations, Shira Lester-Cohen, Mazon's executive director, told The CJN.

The event featured a cooking demonstration with cookbook author and CJN contributor Norene Gilletz speaking on Food Memories: Then and Now.

As well, some 300 attendees sampled the offerings of Toronto-area kosher caterers and wine merchants.

The crowd sipped wine, or cocktails such as Cosmopolitans and Purple Hazes, and chose from a range of dishes, from truffled beef carpaccio and deep-fried gefilte fish with horseradish aioli to sushi and pareve Indian-style "butter paneer" (with tofu replacing the traditional cheese).

Less adventurous types could try gluten-free hot dogs, fresh fruit smoothies or all-natural salads, among other selections.

"People today are not cooking the way they used to," Gilletz said in her presentation.

She demonstrated how to make mock chopped liver, grilled chicken and potato-onion knishes from scratch.

The mock liver was based on mushrooms, a cholesterol-free substitute for the original meat, with onions that were "sautéed until they're brown and very well caramelized." It also included hard-boiled eggs, almonds and a touch of salt.

"You have to taste the food, of course," Gilletz said.

To serve it, she used an ice-cream scoop, and placed a thin wedge of pumpernickel on the serving.

"It makes it fancy," she explained.

"Another nice presentation would be to take this mixture and put it into a mould," she added, recalling Herman Wouk's 1955 novel *Marjorie Morningstar*.

"You can line a bowl with plastic, and then unmould it," she said.

"If you're a bubbie or a zaide, you should be cooking with your children and your grandchildren," Gilletz added. "Pass those traditions on."

Parents urged to respect kids' coping mechanisms

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

We must not think that everyone deals with trauma in the same way, says psychologist and author David Pelcovitz.

"Coping comes in different flavours, and we can't be judgmental. We have to support each other's coping mechanisms," said Pelcovitz, a professor at Yeshiva University's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education, director of psychology at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, N.Y., clinical professor of psychology at New York University's school of medicine and the author of Balanced Parenting.

Speaking at a recent lecture at Beth Avraham Yoseph Synagogue co-sponsored by the shul along with B'nai Torah Congregation and Yeshiva University, Pelcovitz said that when kids are going through a hard time, such as a painful medical procedure, they usually fall into one of two categories.

"There are the distracters who don't want to know what is going on and need things to get their mind off what is happening, and the attenders, who need to know everything. We have to let the distracters distract and the attenders attend. [In that way] they'll build up a toolbox of coping mechanisms that can be helpful for them."

Some people need to talk, he said, and some people need to escape. "That is true in any family. Spouses deal differently with difficult issues."

When children are facing issues such as death, illness or financial crisis, it's like "they're living on a narrow bridge. By letting them know we're there for them, we build a protective shield around them."

Pelcovitz cited studies that found children who were uprooted because their families lost their homes came through the crisis resiliently if their family stayed together despite the stress.

"Although the parents had lost everything, they built a protective shield around their children."

He stressed that parents need to talk to their children "mindfully. They have to override all technology and be there. That is a key point in helping our children through stressful times."

Youth from wealthy homes have about triple the rate of anxiety than their less affluent counterparts, he said, "because it is never good enough for them to be average. As well, their parents are often too busy."

When kids are not asked to pitch in at home, he said, "they take, and they don't [learn] to give back. That leads to entitlement and being unable to deal with stress."

The bottom line, Pelcovitz said, is that we have to be there for our children, "teach them what matters, give them a voice, and light a spark in their souls. Hopefully they will be able to deal with whatever comes their way."

Youth book contest addresses racism

An awards ceremony for Toronto Residents in Partnership's Morley S. Wolfe Youth Book Competition: Challenging Racism and Celebrating Differences is being held on March 5, at 7 p.m. at the North York Central Library auditorium. The annual contest is open to high school students who create children's books that address issues that are incompatible with the values of equity and inclusion. Arielle Maze, a student at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, is among the five finalists.

WINTER WONDERLAND: The senior kindergarten at the United Synagogue Day School's Beth Tzedec campus was transformed into an enchanting winter wonderland on Feb. 25. Parents were treated to icicles, snowmen, pizza, hot chocolate and warm smiles. From left are Ellie Joseph and Abbey Stein with their skiing sculptures.

Canadian Society for Yad Vashem
The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority

Please Help Us Honour Ontario's Holocaust Survivors

The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem
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Ontario Holocaust Survivors
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The Survivors of the Holocaust have risen from the ashes of the Shoah to establish themselves and their families as invaluable members of Canadian Society. **They deserve to be honoured for their strength and resilience.**

Please contact the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem to nominate Holocaust Survivors who have contributed to making a better future for us all.

Fran Sonshine
National Chair
The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem

Yaron Ashkenazi
Executive Director
The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem

Please send all recommendations, including name, full contact information and background of the Holocaust Survivor to:
Gillian Weintraub, Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, 970 Lawrence Ave. West, Suite 211, Toronto, Ontario M6A 3B6
gillian@yadvashem.ca Tel - 416-785-1333 Fax- 416-785-4536
Approximately 10-15 Holocaust Survivors are honoured each year. All recommendations must be received by March 19, 2009.
Remembering the Past, Shaping the Future

York president addresses climate on his campus

Continued from page 3

the individuals identified and give them an opportunity to present their perspective."

Tiffin added that students involved in the confrontation with Jewish students could receive penalties ranging from fines to suspensions.

At the CFJS press conference last week, Ferman said he was disappointed with York's response so far.

"It's been more than two weeks since this [Feb. 11 incident] occurred, and the only response we've heard from them is that they're investigating. After two weeks, we'd hoped that actions would be taken to protect Jewish students and all students."

York president Mamdouh Shoukri also spoke out against the climate at York when he addressed the university's senate on Feb. 26. He said that when students returned to school following a 12-week strike by teaching assistants and contract teachers, they were faced with "disruption, hostility and even intimidation from their fellow students.

"This state of affairs is unacceptable to me, and it should be unacceptable to you. Intimidation, bullying, and discrimination will not be tolerated here, and we are taking action to protect the rights and the safety of all students and staff," Shoukri said.

Although York hasn't finished investigating the Feb. 11 incident, the administration has issued proposed sanctions to student groups involved in a rally and counter-rally in York's Vari Hall rotunda on Feb. 12 for using sound amplification devices that disrupted classes.

Hasbara and Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) were sent letters of intent stating that they will each receive a 30-day suspension and fines totalling $1,250 for the Feb. 12 rallies. The sanctions against Hillel would be a 15-day suspension and fines totalling $650.

Tiffin said he is waiting to finalize the penalties after hearing from all the groups this week.

"To take action against rally participants and not against members of a mob who deliberately threatened Jewish students reflects York's lack of credibility," Yablonsky said in the statement.

Kochman referred to a number of anti-Semitic incidents by "racist thugs" who voice "the most vile expressions of race hatred. They can enjoy no conceivable protection of academic discourse. They are expressly intended to silence debate, to shut down discussion, to intimidate those who disagree. And they are becoming shockingly frequent on Canadian campuses."

For example, he said, posters at the University of Manitoba "have ranged from offensive to blatantly racist," and they include "the same type of anti-Semitic caricatures that you would see in the 1930s Nazi Germany."

The posters include images such as an Israeli fighter jet dropping missiles on a baby carriage, and a hook-nosed, bearded Jewish man pointing a rocket at a Palestinian defending himself with a slingshot.

Ferman said York students wearing items that identify them as Jewish, such as a kippah or a Star of David necklace, have had anti-Semitic slurs directed at them while walking to class.

"We need people urging the administrations on campus to uphold their own codes of conduct, to start protecting these students," Kochman said.

"Enough is enough. Our students are calling out for further help and they're doing the best they can and we're doing the best we can, but we need more support."

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Jewish Students unite to fight intimidation and harassment

Students refuse to be bullied; say enough is enough

By Howard English and Sally Szuster

Jewish students from across the GTA including York University, University of Toronto and Ryerson University have come together in a show of solidarity to counter Israel Apartheid Week and other intimidating events on their campuses.

Israel Apartheid Week (IAW) is an initiative by opponents of Israel on campuses around the world that accuses Israel of practicing apartheid. The video trailer for this year's edition of IAW claims the event is taking place "in the wake of the brutal military assault on Gaza" and that "the latest massacres further confirm the reality of Israeli apartheid." It goes on to demand that Israel "end the occupation and the colonization of all Arab lands."

Jewish students from several organizations, such as Hillel of Greater Toronto, financially supported by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Hasbara Fellowships, the Canadian Centre for Israel Activism and Zionists at U of T, have mounted a proactive campaign against IAW that involves a workshop for students, empowering them to deal with IAW allegations and special guest speakers, such as David Makovsky, a senior fellow and director of The Washington Institute's Project on the Middle East Peace Process. Students will be at information tables with materials that urge an end to intimidation on campus and highlight Israel as a democratic and peaceful country. There's also a hard hitting on line campaign at www.peaceoncampus.ca.

"The campus community will be exposed to the truth about Israel, its democratic values and its consistent efforts to achieve peace," said Orna Hollander, president of the Canadian Centre for Israel Activism.

Israel Apartheid Week follows a wave of incidents at York University, which involved threats, intimidation, anti-Semitic slurs against Jewish students and the barricading of Hillel's lounge at York by an anti-Israel mob.

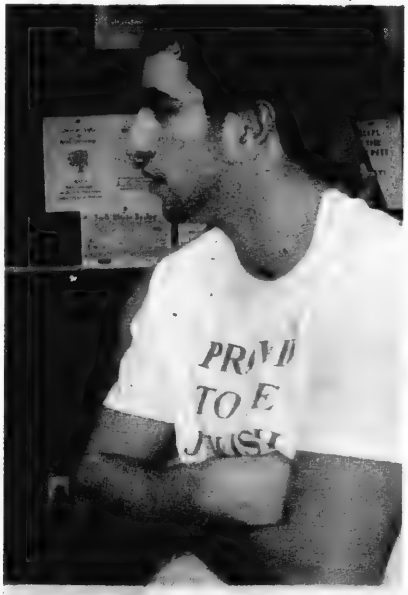
"Students are saying enough is enough. This is no longer just an issue of Israel advocacy. This is about every student's right to pursue their education free of fear and intimidation. All students, not just Jewish students, are fed up with the toxic environment on their campuses, aggravated by Israel Apartheid Week and fed by a small group of students trying to forward their own hate-inspired agenda," said Daniel Ferman, president of Hillel@York.

The hostility toward Jewish students at York has generated a large degree of Jewish community concern and anger. Dozens of community members have written to York president Mamdouh Shoukri after receiving an e-mail from UJA Federation about the situation.

"The community outpouring about this issue has been extraordinary. It is a loud and clear message to students that we, as a community, stand with them every step of the way," said UJA Federation chair David Koschitzky.

UJA Federation, CIJA (Canadian Council of Israel & Jewish Advocacy), UOC (University Outreach Committee), Canadian Jewish Congress Ontario Region and their student partners have been mobilizing the community, discussing the situation with political representatives and university donors, examining ways to improve student security and consulting with police.

"As campus leaders and activists, what we accomplish by working together will also shape the future of our community," said Ferman.



Matan Hazaov, Hillel's Israel Affairs student board member wearing "Proud to be Jewish" t-shirt in the Hillel lounge at York University.

Student Esther Mendelsohn in the Hillel lounge at York University, creating signs and posters in preparation for the rally.

Jewish students protest against anti-Israel rally at York University.

Jewish students wearing t-shirts stating "Jews need not fear here" while protesting against an anti-Israel rally at York University.

Globe column repeats myths about Iran's intentions

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

In "Iran: the enemy that almost isn't," (Globe and Mail, Feb. 21) Doug Saunders argued that Tehran could well return to its halcyon days under former president and "pro-Western reformist" Mohammed Khatami, who is again a candidate for president of Iran.

Saunders claims that in the spring of 2003, Khatami sent a Swiss official to Washington with a "peace offer": "In exchange for recognizing Israel, cutting off Hamas and proving it had abolished any nuclear weapons plans, Iran wanted an end to sanctions, normal diplomatic relations with the U.S. and recognition of its role in the region."

Saunders insisted that the deal was rejected by the Bush administration, because "nobody in the White House thought it would look good to make peace with Iran, a country that only the year before had been made a rhetorical component in Mr. Bush's 'axis of evil.'"

In the end, Saunders wrote, "the offer was stuck in a drawer. That diplomatic snub was one of several humiliations, diplomatic and economic, that led to the defeat of Mr. Khatami's reformists in subsequent elections and the victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's neo-conservative [sic] zealots."

If all this sounds too good to be true, that might be because it almost certainly isn't true.

In "The Guldimann Memorandum: The Iranian 'road map' wasn't a road map and wasn't Iranian" (Weekly Standard, Oct. 22, 2007), Michael Rubin, a former Pentagon advisor on Iran and Iraq, debunked this alleged Iranian peace offer.

The fallacy gained traction, Rubin wrote, when Peter Galbraith, a former American ambassador to Croatia, wrote in the Oct. 11, 2007, New York Review of Books that the Bush administration had refused an Iranian offer to settle all outstanding disputes.

Rubin wrote: "The problem is that [Galbraith's] argument is rooted in a fraud. The 'Iranian Road Map'… was not an Iranian overture but the work of a disgruntled Swiss diplomat, Tim Guldimann."

According to Rubin, "Guldimann developed the one-page 'road map' in conversation with Sadeq Kharrazi, the Iranian ambassador in Paris."

Guldimann, then the Swiss ambassador to Tehran, was not "sent" to the United States. Rather, he sent his proposal by fax to American officials, who could not reconcile this missive with what they were hearing from their own Iranian contacts. But in any event, only the word of Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, matters, and there's no evidence he approved of any such proposal.

Rubin concluded: "There was no Iranian offer in May 2003, but rather a Hail Mary pass thrown by an activist ambassador and pitched by limelight-seeking former officials to a receptive press. Almost seven years into the Bush administration, Tehran has yet to offer a single confidence-building measure."

Even proponents of negotiating with Iran, most notably former (2001-05) deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage, acknowledged that the offer was a myth.

Saunders went on in his piece to dismiss claims that Iran is close to developing nuclear weapons. Among his arguments, he cited as proof "[o]ur most authoritative source of information about Iran's nuclear program… the 2007 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate [NIE], which stated categorically, based on voluminous sources, that Iran had abandoned its nuclear-weapons program in 2003."

However, the 2007 NIE report was neither authoritative nor was this statement made "categorically." In fact, the NIE asserted only with "high confidence," not as an established fact, that Iran had desisted from its weapons program in 2003. The report immediately added that Iran was "at a minimum" keeping open "the option" to develop nuclear weapons, something Tehran has been pursuing with its nuclear fuel enrichment program – in violation of International Atomic Energy Agency directives, leading to UN sanctions.

In 2008, Mike McConnell, the director of U.S. national intelligence in charge of the NIE report, admitted before a Senate committee to careless wording in the report about Iran's nuclear weapons aim.

Moreover, many other intelligence sources, including European ones, claim Tehran is currently pressing ahead with its quest for nuclear weapons.

For whatever reason, Saunders ignored these developments.

He concluded his piece with a glib misinterpretation of quantum theory – saying that "simply by looking at Iran as a threat, we've made it one" and that if we look at it differently, we'll likely find something else entirely. Reality, in Saunders view, is what we choose to see, not what's actually there.

What nonsense.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Enjoy the Purim show...help children at risk

Compiled by CJN Staff

In a unique partnership, Beth Tzedec Congregation and Jewish Family & Child have teamed up to present this year's original Purim musical and celebration at the synagogue.

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Created by Cantor Simon Spiro, a British pop singer, and his wife Aliza, an American singer/songwriter, the show is complete with a full professional orchestra, state-of-the-art sound and lights, glittering sets, jugglers, acrobats and the king's horse.

The Las Vegas Megillah will also feature a king who looks like Elvis, an evil man named Hamanilow, and showgirls of all shapes and sizes.

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Aliza Spiro said they are raising money and raising awareness of JF&C because new financial challenges have arisen as the result of a funding crisis facing the agency and other Ontario children's aid societies, as well as the growing needs of the community being served.

In the lobby before the show, audience members can learn about the organization they are helping to support, she said.

"It is a tough time for them, and by piggybacking on this production, everyone coming will be exposed to the agency and its good work."

There will be four performances of The Las Vegas Megillah – March 7, 8 p.m.; March 8, 2 and 7 p.m.; and March 9 after the Megillah reading, approximately 8 p.m. Tickets are $10 for adults, $2 for children 13 and under. Call 416-781-3514, ext. 218.

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The benefit of feeling happy for others

Life Coach Corner
Judy Siblin-Librach

In thinking about what bliss is and what it isn't, and seeing people at their best and not at their best, I have come to realize that there is a state of mind that stands in the way of people feeling happy and "in their bliss."

That state is one of jealousy and envy. In the Bible and in Shakespeare's plays, there are many accounts of people who suffer from jealousy, which is not only one of the worst emotions, it's also an emotion that poisons and destroys lives.

Look at Cain and Abel. When God clearly favoured Abel, Cain, driven by jealousy, killed his brother and was forced into a life of misery and despair. We only have to look to the Torah and to Jewish writings to know that jealousy is always destructive, even more to the person who is jealous than to the person he/she is jealous of.

According to William Penn in Some Fruits of Solitude, "The jealous are troublesome to others, but a torment to themselves." In the Book of Proverbs, it states, "Jealousy in the heart makes the bones rot."

What is jealousy? According to Webster's Dictionary, the word "jealous" means "resentful and envious, as of someone's success, achievements and advantages."

Jealousy is when a person feels resentment that someone else has something they think they rightfully deserve. Another definition of jealousy is when someone wants something that belongs to someone else.

In the Bible, God forbids us to be jealous. The reason it is forbidden is that everything we have in this world comes from God, and as it states in Mirrors of Our Lives, "God gives each person what he needs to maximize his potential."

Jealousy is accompanied by a wish that another person should not have the accomplishment or achievement at all. The jealous person becomes so focused on what someone else has that he/she never develops the ability to figure out what he/she does indeed have. Also, living with a constant state of jealousy creates anger, rage, depression and destructive, unethical behaviour.

How do you know when someone is envious of your success? If silence is the response to the particular success you are experiencing, or if there is a negative energy that you can feel in the room and it doesn't make anyone feel good, someone envies your success. The jealous person finds it difficult to be happy for you. There is no space for generosity and joy, because he/she is so consumed by the flames of their jealousy that he/she can't see and be happy for your good news, as it only illuminates what he/she doesn't have.

I love what Oprah says about the writer and activist Maya Angelou, that when Angelou receives an award, she always feels as if it's happening to her, too. That's exactly what we all want to strive for.

Remember, when we hear about someone else's success, it should make us feel good, too, because we really are all connected to one another and someone else's success becomes ours as well.

Jealousy is really a fear that you don't have value, that you don't have enough. "Envy is the art of counting the other fellow's blessings instead of your own," says author Harold Coffin. The irony is that by counting the other person's blessings, you miss the very thing you should be focusing on, which is appreciating and building on what you have that is unique, original and special. What are your strengths? What distinguishes you from everyone else? Those are the areas that should become your starting point.

The topic of jealousy is a hot potato. It makes people squirm and feel uncomfortable, because we have all experienced a modicum of envy, which can be very natural. If you see someone swim well, you are motivated to improve your stroke. When you hear that someone has just run a marathon, you might even think to yourself, what a lofty goal, maybe I'll start running. That's healthy and creates positive energy, motivation and forward motion. So where does it get uncomfortable? It becomes uncomfortable when jealousy stands in the way of your happiness and interferes with your relationships. Jealousy keeps you stuck, and as a coach, my mission is always to get people to move forward.

If you are faced with a jealous person in your life, remember never to stoop to his/her level, ignore the behaviour and fight back with goodness, love and kindness. Learn to be happy for others, because when we are happy for others, we are always happier ourselves.

Judy Siblin-Librach is an Adler-trained coach. Website: www.findingyourbliss.com; e-mail: judyelle@ican.net

Dance troupe helps those with developmental delays

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Helen Winkler, leader of Move'n'Mingle, an international folk dance program for adults and teens with developmental delays, gets as much out of the program as her students.

Adults and teens with developmental delays kick up their heels at their weekly dance program, Move'n'Mingle.

"It is so rewarding for me to take my hobby, and see the positive effect it has on people," she says.

Held at the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, the program is co-sponsored by the BJCC, Reena and Yachad, an organization that brings together young adults with developmental disabilities and their peers.

Winkler has been involved with international folk dance for 30 years and has taught international and Israeli folk dancing for the past 27 years.

With a strong interest in the dances of Jews of eastern Europe, she maintains a website – www.yiddishdance.com – dedicated to the revitalization of these arts.

She is a member of the Performing Arts Educators of Canada's international folk dance division, she's on the steering committee of the Ontario Folk Dance Association, and she's a member of the Yiddish Dance Action Network.

Winkler, whose 21-year-old daughter has Down syndrome and dances in the troupe – members range in age from high school students to people in their mid-60s – said that for the purpose of the program, she simplifies the movements and slows down the music.

"I extract from the dances what I think will work well."

She said that some dancers come with helpers, and a couple come in wheelchairs.

Members enjoy both the dancing and the socializing, Winkler said. "It helps their self-esteem when they get out and learn a new skill and make some new friends."

She said the troupe has performed at Reena and at last summer's Kinus Conference, and she would like to schedule further performances. "The dancers feel good when they see the response they get."

The next program, which is set to begin March 19, is open to new members. For information, call Teme Kernerman at 416-636-1880.

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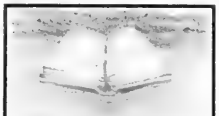
Jewish Life

A happy holiday's sad lesson

By RABBI MARK FRIEDMAN



Rabbinic Reflections

Purim is a time of gaiety and rejoicing. We read the Megillah, sound the graggers and enjoy hamantashen. But Purim also sounds a note of sadness, because it reminds us of the perennial problem of anti-Semitism, as exemplified by the cruel Haman. In the Midrash, a certain Rabbi Levi comments: "Woe unto the wicked, who are constantly forming evil designs against Israel, each one saying, 'My plan is better than yours.'"

Here, Rabbi Levi implies that one of the tragic side effects of human progress is the fact that it appears to bring with it a continual perfection of the means of destruction of our people. He observes that Haman believed that Pharoah was foolish. He only ordered that Jewish males should be destroyed. He did not realize or take into account that the females would marry and bear children. Haman would not make the same mistake. He would order the destruction of all Jews, male and female, young and old.

How true is Rabbi Levi's observation. There was a time Jews suffered from oppression and from occasional pogroms whenever mobs were incited against them. But then there arose a new anti-Semitism that declared the past anti-Semitism foolish and unsystematic. This anti-Semitism decreed a "final solution" for the Jewish problem. Six million of our people were destroyed and the lives of hundreds of thousands more were crippled.

Now, we are experiencing a new form of anti-Semitism. It seems to be, in general, unacceptable to disparage individual Jews or Jews in general. But it clearly is acceptable, in a number of circles, not to criticize the actions of the Israeli government, but to viciously attack the State of Israel and question if not deny its right to exist.

If one listens, as I do, to certain radio stations, one can hear remarks, from time to time, that paint Israel in the most outrageous terms, even hinting that Israel is a rogue, illegitimate state. Yet, one hears nary a word concerning Sudan, Myanmar, or North Korea and their repressive, dictatorial regimes from these same sources. Why is this the case? Among the reasons for this would be that such incendiary remarks represent anti-Semitism in its latest and most modern form. It's true that one can still hear the older, direct attacks on the Jews in some quarters. But this is unacceptable among those radio reporters to whom I refer. For them, it seems, to directly attack the Jewish people is outside the boundaries of public discourse. Attacking the Jewish state is not.

Rabbi Levi's midrash concludes with these words from the Prophets: "Then shall the Lord go forth and fight... and the Lord shall be King over all the earth."

Somehow, says Rabbi Levi, the tyrants never seem to learn from the experiences of their predecessors. Pharoah tried to destroy our people, but he and his army were drowned. Haman had already persuaded the King of Persia to order the destruction of the Jewish people. The date was set and all the necessary preparations were made. But what was the result? "They hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai." And what of the Jews of Shushan? "Layehudim hayta orah vesimchah, vesason viykar" – "The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honour."

We need to believe and have faith that just as tyrants throughout history sought to destroy us and could not, so will this latest tyranny against the existence of the Jewish state also come to naught and we shall proudly declare: Am Yisrael chai – despite all the machinations against us, the people of Israel in all corners of the earth, live.

Rabbi Mark Friedman is rabbi of the Castel Royale Senior Residence in Cote St. Luc, Quebec.

Modern warfare is messy, unfortunately

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

JEWISH EDUCATION
The Next Generation

Fought over the course of only three days in 1863 (July 1 to 3), the Battle of Gettysburg had the largest amount of casualties in the American Civil War. The death toll on both sides was just under 8,000, with another 27,000 seriously wounded and 11,000 captured or missing – all of this in less than 72 hours.

As sobering as those statistics may be, what is perhaps more noteworthy is one other fact. Jennie Wade was 20 years old and engaged to be married when the Battle of Gettysburg commenced. At 8 a.m. on July 3, while kneading dough in her kitchen, a stray Confederate musket ball ricocheted off of two doors in her house and lodged beneath her shoulder blade. She died instantly, the only civilian death from Gettysburg. Her demise was considered a deep tragedy and was mourned on both sides. Her body was carried out by Union soldiers, and she was buried in a coffin fashioned by Confederate soldiers.

How much the rules of warfare have changed can be easily discerned when one turns to recent events in Gaza. Detractors fiercely criticize Israel for the number of children killed over the course of three weeks, and defenders of Israel not only point out that the country was long overdue in responding to Hamas rocket fire, but that Hamas fighters were deliberately embedded among the civilian populace, thus guaranteeing the deaths of innocents.

Whatever one's politics, it has become clear to everyone that the strictly enforced battle lines of wars past are – literally – history, and that to engage in military conflict today means to recognize that, for a whole variety of reasons too lengthy to rehearse here, civilians will die.

Israel gets preached to from all ends of the spectrum. Those on the right will sanctimoniously bemoan what they see as the Israeli government's reticence in "not finishing the job" – destroying Hamas completely, regardless of the civilian cost. The self-righteous consciences on the left will remind Israel about proportionality, as though Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Hamas leader Khaled Meshal could be likened to Robert E. Lee, and that the genteel codes that governed the reaction to Jenny Wade's death are telecast daily on Al-Jazeera.

Often, the pragmatic solution is the one least satisfying to all sides of the ideological divide. But one must be wary of the alternative, the reversion to "purer" and less-compromised attitudes.

One such ideal was expressed in its quintessential form by Gandhi, who wrote to Martin Buber that rather than counter the Nazis through violent means, the Jews should have practised satayagraha (soul-force), a version of non-violent resistance, even if would mean every last Jew were to be massacred. Gandhi's position was idealistic and consistent. It would make the champions of international law very happy. But had it been followed, none of us in the Jewish community would be alive today to discuss its benefits.

On the other hand, if one advocates for the other purity, one must be prepared, given how Hamas almost seems to relish its own civilian casualties, for the carnage of tens of thousands of dead children.

Sometimes the world is as it is rather than how we would like it to be, and perhaps, for the moment, that may be as good as it gets.

Jewish Life

Evils of religious fanaticism

Abraham's Curse: The Roots of Violence in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, by Bruce Chilton, Doubleday.

Books
Bernard Baskin

The biblical account of the Aqedah is familiar. Abraham is about to sacrifice his son Isaac when at the last moment, an angel stops him, telling Abraham that he has passed his test of faith and doesn't need to actually slit the boy's throat.

In all three of the Abrahamic religions, the moral of the story is that God rejects human sacrifice. However, the author of this disturbing book, a professor of religion and the rector of an Anglican church, attempts to show how all three religions have managed, at one time or another, to twist or ignore the story and to interpret it, not as a condemnation of martyrdom, but as a glorification of it.

History and the daily headlines show that militant religion and violence seem to go together, from Islamic suicide bombings and graphic glorifications of the crucifixions of Jesus to the indefensible actions of Israeli extremists.

Chilton shows the terrible "blood harvest" that leads from the Crusaders to pogroms against Jews to the European wars between Catholics and Protestants, right down to our own time. He concludes that the "impulse to praise martyrdom and therefore to encourage adolescents to become martyrs is embedded in the cultural DNA of the West."

However, after his depiction of the evils that flow from religious fanaticism, the author, in the final portion of his book, castigates the recent exponents of atheism. He advises his readers that the "more closely the three religions relate to one another in their mutual challenge to realize the blessing of Abraham, the more quickly that interpretive and ethical key will turn in the lock of Abraham's curse."

Verdict: A scholarly, often tedious mélange of theology and history around a dubious theory.

Living Without God, by Ronald Aronson, Counterpoint Publishing.

The author of this humanist approach to reality is the grandson of Jewish immigrants and a professor of the history of ideas at Wayne Sate University in Detroit.

A longtime socialist, he takes as his starting point Immanuel Kant's three questions – "What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope?" Above all, Aronson is eager to make us think. He writes, "Instead of lending our power to a being above us and then asking for it to be lent back to us, we may be able to feel our power as drawn from and connected to, all that we depend on."

This interconnectedness makes it imperative that we assume responsibility for the nature of our society. For example, he writes that the coming to power of Hitler and the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust "required the active or passive consent of tens of millions. Many of the accomplices may have done very little or even nothing. Some only averted their eyes. But each did "exactly what was needed" for the triumph of evil.

Aronson asks and strives to answer questions such as these: "Without God, how do we experience gratitude for life's gifts? How do we confront aging and death? How do we make sense of an often insane and inexplicable society?"

It is refreshing that he is less interested in attacking religion than in offering an alternative to those "who manage to live fundamentally secular lives and who search for meaning and truth."

For the most part, his approach is humane, modest and irrepressibly hopeful. He points out that the most unequal and insecure of advanced societies, the United States, is also the one that has the greatest presence and intensity of belief in heaven above and in a transcendent force managing human lives.

Verdict: A well-meaning, readable humanist approach to the modern situation that offers few answers to the old, baffling questions that religion poses.

Purim around the world

BY MARK MIETKIEWICZ

"King Achashverosh was Finnish with his disobedient wife Vashti. 'You Congo now!' he ordered her. After she had Ghana way, the king's messengers went Roman the land to find a new queen. And India end, the beautiful Esther won the crown."

Think you know everything about Purim? Think again. As Judaism's happiest day of the year, we are familiar with the graggers, the masquerades and the hamantashen. But how about holiday snowmen, human-shaped cakes and crying cacti? These are just some of the Purim traditions from around the world.

In **Cairo**, revellers would take to the streets in costume, riding donkeys that were dyed in stripes and patterns. **Lithuania** would see yeshiva students get the opportunity to dress up as rabbis, deliver outrageous speeches and gently mock their teachers. In **Minsk**, they were ingenious with their noisemakers: "a hammer was fixed to an anvil, to strike at every mention of Haman. A large stone rigged to ropes, was released with a loud thud… A tinsmith and his two sons made a noisemaker with tin balls rolling from chamber to chamber, jingling and jangling." **[tinyurl.com/purim09]**

How many ways can you think of to let Haman have it? In **Afghanistan**, they stomped on Haman cutouts, and in **Yemen**, they dragged a Haman scarecrow through the streets. **[tinyurl.com/purim13]** In wintry **Bukhara**, a large "snow-Haman" was built near the synagogue. After the meal, a bonfire was built and everyone gathered to sing while "Haman" melted. **[tinyurl.com/purim11]**

Over in **Germany** on Purim eve, torches containing gunpowder would be ignited. During the Megillah reading, the gunpowder exploded with a deafening noise. In **Italy**, youngsters would divide into two camps and throw nuts at each other. And how about that Salonikan tradition? "Haman-shaped" cakes were baked and placed on the window ledges until the festive Purim meal. During the meal, the cakes were sliced and eaten.

What would a tour of Purim around the world be without a look at the traditions of the country where it all began, **Persia**? "Esther and Mordechai existed in the conscious and subconscious during the whole year," said Rabbi David Shofet of Santa Monica's Nessah Israel Congregation. Iranian Jews would often make the trek to pray at the tombs of Esther and Mordechai. "It was the Jewish place to go and ask and pray and cry, especially when it was difficult to go to Israel and the Kotel HaMaaravi," the Western Wall. As for other traditions, Rabbi Shofet remembers effigies of Haman being hanged and burned in backyards and mounds of halvah in the mishloach manot. **[tinyurl.com/purim04]**

Make sure to download the marvellous booklet, Purim Traditions from the Lands of the Galuyot. It has yet more traditions, including from **Yemen** where "they would find a cactus with many branches, spread them like heads in a row and call them 'the 10 sons of Haman.'" They would then bury them in a "grave" or throw darts at them "so that they would leak the milky juice from inside. They would say that these were the tears of Haman begging for forgiveness, but he didn't deserve it." In **Morocco**, they would bake challah with hard-boiled eggs inside. When they sliced and ate the challah, they would say they were tearing out the eyes of Haman. Ouch! **[tinyurl.com/purim02]**

And then there is The World Famous Story of Purim. Rather than try to explain this piece of work, I'll leave it to you to wade through it. Here's how the story ends… as if you didn't know. (Best to read it aloud.) **[tinyurl.com/purim07]**

"Haman and his 10 sons were hanged and went immediately to the Netherlands. And to Sweden the deal, the Jews were allowed to Polish off the rest of their foes as well. 'You lost your enemies and Uganda friend,' the king smiled. And that is why the Purim story Israeli a miracle. God decided to China light on His chosen people. So now, let's celebrate! Forget all your Syria's business and just be happy! Serb up some wine and Taiwan on!"

Happy Purim!!!

* * *

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

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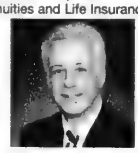

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Woman donates hair to kids who've lost theirs

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — Floralove Katz's four-line e-mail signature is a concise summary of her eclectic accomplishments: "Senior policy adviser, government of Canada; Licensed wedding officiant, province of Ontario; Band leader, artistic director, the Ottawa Klezmer Band; Professional mediator, conflict resolution."

Add to that "volunteer extraordinaire" and you have a picture of a woman whose boundless enthusiasm and mammoth talents have enriched her adopted city of Ottawa in a variety of ways.

Katz's latest mitzvah is the donation of her hair to Locks of Love, a non-profit organization that provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children in Canada and the United States who have lost their hair for medical reasons.

"I first learned about Locks of Love in a TV news story about four years ago. A young girl in elementary school was deeply moved by the story of another little girl elsewhere in the United States who had suffered from alopecia [a disease that causes baldness]," Katz said.

"The story featured the first little girl determining to grow her hair long enough [10 inches, tip to tip] to convert into a wig for the little bald girl. Eventually she did, and the short news piece showed her going to the hair salon with her mom and the deft young wig-maker who donated his time and talent for the new wig, and eventually, the two smiling little girls meeting – with their mothers – both sporting the same hairstyle, and the same hair colour, of course."

Floralove Katz with her hairdresser after her haircut

Katz said that she "was so moved by that act of selflessness and goodwill and the happiness it generated in so many people and the potential for further goodwill, I resolved to do the same and started growing my hair long from then on."

On a lighter note, Katz regularly donates her musical talents as both a vocalist and cellist. She's a soprano with the Opera Lyra Ottawa chorus who served for 10 years as lay cantor at Ottawa's Temple Israel, and she performs regularly with her own 25-year-old Ottawa Klezmer Band. The band has played across Canada and in the United States.

Active in the Jewish community and on behalf of Israel, Katz has used her musical talent to promote peace and understanding. In one such project, she brought together more than 100 musicians, poets, artists, and parliamentarians of all parties on one stage for a concert titled "Suicide Bombing is an Act of Genocide Against All of Humanity."

Ballerinas are rehearsing in Tel Aviv.

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Coast to Coast

Jews must reject Turkey's genocide denial

By NORMAN L. EPSTEIN

Guest Voice

"Dogs can enter, but no Jews, no Armenians" read the odious sign that encapsulates the pernicious anti-Semitism percolating in Turkey – all in response to Israel's recent incursion in Gaza. Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan has been leading the charge, foaming at the mouth with his repeated rantings and accusations against Israel of "mass murder" and "massacring innocent civilians." Turkish media outlets have further fomented anti-Israel and anti-Jewish sentiment with similar hyperbole. Mass rallies all over Turkey, some of the largest worldwide, have deteriorated into vile anti-Semitic spectacles.

The height of hypocrisy is self-evident in Turkey's own highly suspect human rights record. Moreover, its own campaign against Kurdish separatists in northern Iraq has caused thousands of innocent civilian deaths over the years, with little effort to avoid mass casualties.

Israel has carved out a close strategic alliance with Turkey recently, the only genuine one it has with a country in the Muslim world. It was born out of necessity, and Turkey has served as a mediator in peace talks, particularly with Syria, in exchange for advancing Turkey's military know-how and technology.

In light of recent events, there has been much reflection in Israel on the make-up and tenor of this expedient alliance. I am not going to debate the merits of the relationship. However, there is a very unsettling element to it. This partnership is predicated on pro-Israel groups in the United States working in concert with pro-Turkey groups to prevent the U.S. Congress from passing a resolution (which has passed in Canada) recognizing the genocide of the Armenians by Turkish nationalists at the beginning of the 20th century. This denial by Turkey exists despite compelling and irrefutable evidence.

During the waning years of the Ottoman Empire, a group of army officers overthrew the sultan in 1908. Turkish nationalism began to flourish, and the Armenians, a significant Christian minority, began to assert their own cultural identity and push for regional autonomy. The Turkish leadership resented the Armenians' resistance to assimilation, and plans were made to exterminate the Armenian population.

It started on April 24, 1915, when Armenian leaders were summarily executed. Men of military age were forced into labour camps, and those who survived starvation and illness were shot in mass graves. Hangings and mass executions continued on a large scale. Women, children and the elderly were forced to march for weeks without food, with few surviving.

Females of all ages were brutally subjected to torture, rape and murder. Those who survived such atrocities threw themselves off cliffs. In the end, 1.8 million Armenians perished.

Since the inception of modern Turkey in 1922, resolute denial of the Armenian genocide has been intrinsic to Turkish society. It's a crime to speak of the genocide.

A further disturbing aspect of this denial of history is that Adolf Hitler used the Armenian genocide as a template for the Nazis' Final Solution, curtly saying at the time, "Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?"

As Jews, we are ever so vigilant and outraged whenever diabolical Holocaust deniers rear their ugly heads and spread poisonous hatred. Therefore, it is an absolute moral imperative that Jewish groups not become a party to Turkey's denial of its crime.

Israel is strong enough to redefine its strategic alliance with Turkey on its own terms. But it is morally unacceptable that a people reborn out of the ashes of the Holocaust be complicit, even reluctantly, in the denial of another genocide. It goes against the very essence of the Jewish soul.

Norman Epstein is a physician in Toronto and the founder of Canadians Against Slavery and Torture in Sudan.

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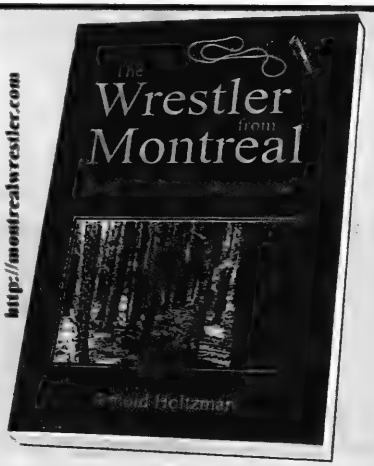

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On Campus

Apartheid week poster banned

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Carleton University and the University of Ottawa have banned one Israeli Apartheid Week poster from their campuses because it included an image that was "inflammatory and capable of inciting confrontation."

The decision, first made by the Carleton administration on Feb. 8, came after the group Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) put up 100 posters throughout the school by political cartoonist Carlos Latuff depicting a helicopter labelled "Israel" firing a missile at a teddy bear-holding toddler labelled "Gaza."

Carleton's equity services ordered that the posters be removed from campus, because they "could incite infringements of the Ontario Human Rights Code," said Carleton spokesperson Lin Moody.

She added that the university did not ban IAW events, but the posters had to be removed because they didn't have the necessary approval to be displayed.

Nearly two weeks later, the University of Ottawa became the second Ottawa-area post-secondary institution to ban the same IAW poster, following Carleton's lead.

U of O issued a statement that said "the administration has the right and the responsibility to ensure that all posters comply with the posting regulations before they are displayed on a bulletin board owned by the university.

"One of the posters in relation to Israeli Apartheid Week was found to be inconsistent with our posting regulations for reasons that included the use of an image that was inflammatory and capable of inciting confrontation."

In the days following the announcement that Carleton would not allow the poster to hang on its walls, Carleton's provost and vice-president academic, Feridun Hamdullahpur, sent a letter to the entire university community calling the posters "hurtful and discriminatory."

He wrote: "Carleton University, regardless of the circumstances, cannot and will not tolerate actions that infringe or contravene the Ontario Human Rights Code and Carleton's own University Human Rights Policy and Procedures."

Hamdullahpur added that if anyone violates the school's policies, they would be subject to sanctions under these rules, and "students can be withdrawn from their studies indefinitely."

Alana Kayfetz, executive director of Hillel Ottawa, commended the schools' response to the situation.

Although Hillel wasn't involved in having the posters removed, Kayfetz said she encouraged Jewish students who complained to her about feeling intimidated to voice their concerns to their school's administration.

"There was an influx of those types of complaints, and I think the administration responded. We commend them, because they responded and they're standing by their guns," she said.

"I think the issue at Carleton originally was that they had printed 100 posters, so you couldn't escape it. It was everywhere."

U of O has approved a different IAW poster, which Kayfetz said students are still complaining that it is offensive.

"They are propaganda posters… It's blue and it has all [IAW event] information. At the bottom of it there is a cartoon image of the 'apartheid wall' with a mother on one side crying and a baby on the other side crying."

There was a similar issue last year at McMaster University when a student group hung a banner in the school's student centre that used the slogan "Israeli Apartheid" and depicted a soldier-like figure pushing a small child.

McMaster spokesperson Andrea Farquhar said that this year, school officials have not seen any IAW posters.

"We certainly don't take a position to say that they aren't going to be allowed. All posters that go up have to be approved individually. But there aren't any that I've seen at the moment. It seems to be something that is more of an issue at other campuses," Farquhar said.

In response to the Ottawa universities' decisions to ban the IAW poster, the Ontario Public Interest Research Group at Carleton staged rallies at Carleton and U of O last week in support of SAIA and Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, student groups that organize IAW events.

According to the OPIRG-Carleton website, the purpose of the rallies was to call on the schools to clarify why the posters were banned and students were invited to "symbolically cover their mouths" as if they were being silenced. Students were also encouraged to deliver letters from unions and organizations to the administrations after marching to the presidents' offices.

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On Campus

Historian returns to Queen's as principal

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

For historian Daniel Robert Woolf, it's nothing less than a homecoming.

Woolf, a 1980 graduate of Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., was recently appointed its new principal and vice-chancellor, succeeding Tom Williams.

"I most certainly regard [the appointment] as going back to my academic home," he said in a recent interview.

Born in London, England, in 1958 and raised in Winnipeg, he officially takes office on Sept. 1 for a five-year term. But in fact, he will return to Queen's on July 1 as a tenured professor in the department of history, juggling administrative duties with teaching.

Daniel Robert Woolf

"I doubt I will be doing any formal course instruction," said Woolf, who is currently dean of the faculty of arts and a professor in the department of history and classics at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

"The demands of administrators are pretty intensive," he added. "I will carry on with graduate supervision, and I don't rule out casual lecturing here and there."

Woolf, a specialist in early modern British cultural history and historical thought, is drawn to administration and teaching.

"I find them both satisfactory," he explained. "With teaching, I still hear from students I have taught over the past 25 years. The notion that I made a difference to these young people in career choice or personal development is, to me, the single most rewarding feature of being an academic.

"With administration, I have less direct student contact, but there is the opportunity to put ideas into practice, to encourage others in their teaching and research, and, now and then, to be able to fix things that always bugged me as a student or professor. Then there is the chance to be an advocate for higher education on a national stage."

Woolf's career has taken him far and wide.

After graduating from Queen's and Oxford University (with a DPhil in modern history), he returned to Queen's as a postdoctoral fellow and teacher.

Subsequently, he was a professor at Bishop's University and Dalhousie University, where he also served as associate dean and acting dean of graduate studies.

In 1999, he joined McMaster University as dean of the faculty of humanities and a member of its history department.

The University of Alberta hired him as its dean of arts in 2002, and he was reappointed in 2007.

In announcing Woolf's most recent appointment at Queen's, the chair of its board of trustees, William Young, described him as "a noted scholar with significant leadership and management credentials that will serve the university well."

Asked what his primary tasks in Kingston will be, Woolf replied, "The most obvious one is that Queen's, like other post-secondary institutions, faces many financial issues, from inadequate operating grants to crumbling infrastructure. Queen's has embarked on a bold, but necessary, capital program, and it will be imperative that I connect early and frequently with all three levels of government and with donors and industry."

Woolf also wants to reconnect with his alma mater by making himself visible on campus.

"I want to make sure that the students feel heard, as I detect on their part a feeling that at times in the past they have not been heard. That's also important to me on another level, since one of my three kids is currently a student at Queen's. In the longer term, I'm especially interested in seeing what can be done to bring research and teaching into a closer relationship."

Despite the demands of his latest job, Woolf is working on two projects. He is the general editor of The Oxford History of Historical Writing, and he's finishing a textbook on historiography for Cambridge University Press.

Woolf said he studied history because the past fascinates him and because he has a knack for dates. His uncle, a historian, greatly influenced him.

Woolf's parents are both retired. His father was an ear, nose and throat surgeon, while his mother was an English professor.

"We immigrated to Canada because consulting physician positions were tough to get in Britain. My mum was evacuated to Canada [during World War II] and had positive memories."

Actively involved in Edmonton's Jewish community, he sits on the membership committee of Temple Beth Ora. In Hamilton, he was a member of the board of governors of Beth Jacob Synagogue, and in Halifax, he was a trustee at Shaar Shalom Synagogue.

"Being Jewish has been an important part of my identity for a long time," he said.

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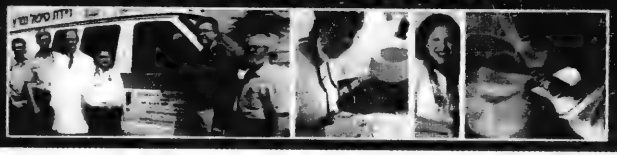

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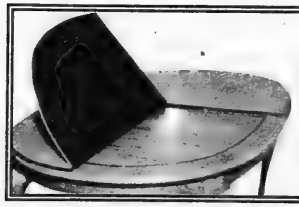

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99-year-old helps archive photos by memory

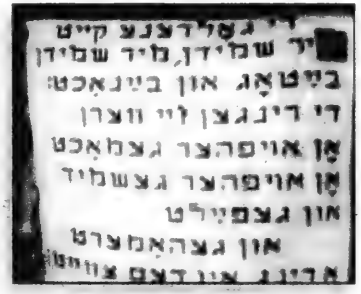
By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Mel Cederbaum, director of Toronto Workman's Circle, is in the process of archiving the 100-year-old organization's pictures and documents with the help of someone who's been there almost since the beginning: 99-year-old Molly Haar.

In preparation for an upcoming get-together – Oct. 17 and 18 – of Workman's Circle's Camp Yungvelt campers, former Peretz school students, Workman's Circle members, and anyone else interested in celebrating the organization's 100th anniversary, Cederbaum is preparing a historical display, assisted by Haar, who is identifying photographs.

"Molly worked at camp and at the *shule* [Yiddish school], and she has an extraordinary memory. Not only does she remember everyone, she can relate stories about them that we can't repeat here."

Born in New York City in June 1909, Haar, who moved here as a child, is still a U.S. citizen. She said that Yiddish was her second language, which she spoke with her husband, Moshe, a Yiddish and history teacher who died in 1966.



Molly Haar, 99, designs and stitches Yiddish pillows

Haar, who has no children, said she has never remarried because her husband, whom she met in Detroit and was married to for 26 years – she returned to Toronto in the mid-1970s – was "too good a husband. He was handsome and intellectual, and he knew about everything, from baseball to theatre. Forty years later, I still miss him."

She has a box of Yiddish letters from her husband, she said, that he wrote when he was drafted in 1943. "What other soldier wrote his wife in Yiddish?"

Describing herself as a "perfectly ordinary woman," Haar, who was dressed in a red sweater and matching scarf and had red, manicured nails, said, "I don't dress like an old woman. I like tailored things."

She never thinks about her age, she said, adding that "my two best friends are 46 and 70. Maybe that's my secret to staying young.

"I don't go out much, but I did drive until I was 90. I watch the news, shop on the Shopping Channel, do crossword puzzles, and read. I love a good story. I don't have a computer. I get a phone call and I make a phone call. That's all I need."

An avid reader of the Jewish Forward and The Canadian Jewish News, Haar thinks U.S. President Barack Obama "is terrific, but he'll have to be a magician to do what he has to do. He's bright and intelligent, and he's head and heels over that other one."

Her favourite hobby is designing and sewing needlepoint pillows, which she adorns with Yiddish expressions.

"I took up this hobby when my husband died. I must have made at least 100 pillows. He would have been pleased with the Yiddish sayings. This type of thing hasn't been done in years. Workman's Circle wants them for their archival display."

She used to be a good cook, she said, and now she teaches her caregivers to cook such dishes as sweet and sour meatballs. "We also buy gefilte fish, and then we re-season and re-cook it. Scrambled eggs and soup is enough for me now, though. I also like a glass of wine, but only once in a while."

Haar lived with her brother until late last year, when he died suddenly at age 90, and she still lives in her own condominium, where she gets part-time help.

She said she has nothing planned for her 100th birthday, "but I think my friends might be planning something."

Those interested in the Workman's Circle get-together – which Haar said she plans to attend – should contact Cederbaum at 41-787-2081 or wcarto@yahoo.com for more details.

Class Acts

PURIM CELEBRATION: Preschoolers and their parents were enthralled by singer Jen Gould's performance at the Leo Baeck Day School Holy Blossom campus' Purim carnival, which included games, face painting and a caricaturist. Kids were encouraged to come in costume. Pictured, from left, are Jory Moscoe, Melanie Ruby, Samantha Moscoe, Lilah Petersiel, Aaron Moscoe and Matthew Moscoe.

[Rebecca Ansel photo]

BUILDING BRIDGES: Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School senior kindergarten students Gabe, Shira, left, and Zoe present freshly baked cookies to Leighton Bain of Ve'ahavta: the Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee. Donations of warm clothing and letters were also distributed as part of a tikkun olam project called Building Bridges and Breaking Down Barriers.

SOCK COLLECTORS: Children at the Miles Nadal JCC Nursery School collected 256 pairs of socks for Ve'ahavta: the Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee to distribute. From left are Jonathan Alter, Eliza Thomas, Ali Silver, Talia Morais, Hana Kosoy, Jona Kosoy, Reuben Piatigorsky-Roth, Kira Schnoor and Jungly Chen.

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Hilda Citron will celebrate her 100th birthday on March 10. Her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren wish her a hearty mazel tov.

Josh Bayer, it's hard to believe that you'll be be 14 on April 23. You are a remarkable young man. Love, Mom, Dad and Rebekah.

Judy & Stephen Holland and Therese & Joseph Elkabas are delighted to announce the engagement of their children Natasha & Danny.

Marley & Sam announce the birth of their baby brother, Zachary Cooper Sky Zaldin (Zohar Marom) on Feb. 16. Zach is welcomed by his parents!

onlysimchas!
Celebrating Jewish Life

Mazel tov on the engagement of Talya Adler & Daniel Gutenberg.

Mazel tov to Stephanie Zar & Michael (Michi) Roubini on their recent engagement.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Devora Jacobowitz & Yoni Cohen.

Mazel tov to Shira Hertzberg & Sidney Shapiro on their recent marriage.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to cblackman@cjnews.com or go online to WWW.CJNEWS.COM and click the Family Moments button!

JNF
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What's New

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www.reveralivng.com

What's New deadlines: Monday, March 9, is the deadline for the March 19 issue and Monday, March 16, is the deadline for the March 26 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Purim Celebrations

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

B'nai Brith Dr. W. Filderman Lodge hosts a Purim party and dinner. 6:30 p.m. at 15 Hove Street. $20. Call **Fanny**, 416-631-0634, or **Neti**, 416-733-1214.

Women's League of Conservative Judaism invite Sisterhood women to Vashti's Banquet. 6:30 p.m. at Shaar Shalom Synagogue. $12. Reserve, 905-764-8141.

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

Oraynu Congregation For Humanistic Judaism hosts a Family Purim Festival. Bring pre-cut nonnut dessert to share. $8, children $5. 131 Fenn Ave. RSVP, 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org.

Temple Sinai Congregation hosts a Multi-generational Megillah Reading and Family Purim Party, with bouncy castles, carnival games, prizes and pizza lunch. 2 years and under, free, 3-12, $12, adults $6. Family pass $45. 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Tickets, 416-487-3281 or education@templesinai.net.

Shaar Shalom Congregation celebrates Purim with a carnival with games and great food. 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. youth@shaarshalom.ca or 905-886-4975

Zichron Yisroel Congregation of AHS hosts a Purim Carnival. 12-4 p.m. at 300 Atkinson Ave. Magician Tricky Ricky 3 p.m. Midway games, costume contest. $3. Game tokens 10/$4.

Beth Torah Congregation hosts a Purim carnival. Noon. Admission, one item for kosher food bank. 416-782-4495, ext. 41

Temple Emanu-El hosts a Purim carnival with games and food. Noon. Wear a costume. Tickets for food and activities. 416-449-3880

MONDAY, MARCH 9

Beit Rayim and **United Synagogue Day School** host the Centre for Conservative Jewish Life's Purim carnival, Ma'ariv service and Megillah reading at Tanenbaum-CHAT. Carnival, 5:30 p.m. Ma'ariv 6:30 p.m. www.beitrayim.org

The Toronto Partnership Minyan begins Minchah at 6:45 p.m., Ma'ariv 7:30 p.m. and Megillah reading at 7:45 p.m. 819 Sheppard Ave. W.

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation hold a pre-Megillah party with **Kayla** for those 3-6 at 7 p.m. Ma'ariv and Megillah reading 7:40 p.m. and Arabian Nights Purim Carnival 9 p.m. www.shomayim.org or 416-789-3213

Pride of Israel Synagogue hosts an animated Megillah reading and Purim carnival with games and prizes. 7-9 p.m. Prizes for children in costume. 416-226-0111, ext. 10

Anshei Minsk Synagogue Purimania: A spirited Megillah reading and Purim party, live band and food. 7:15 p.m. reachus@theminsk.com or 416-595-5723

The Jewish Russian Community Centre hosts five free Purim celebrations with music, Megillah reading, circus juggling show, refreshments, prize for children in costume, jumping castle and more: **Thornhill Woods**, Purim Party and Masquerade, 7:30 p.m. 20 North Rivermede Rd.; **Thornhill**, 7 p.m. at Yorkhill Public School, 350 Hilda Ave.; **Rockford**, 7:15 p.m. at Fisherville Public School, 425 Patricia Ave.; **JRCC Thornhill Woods**, 7:30 p.m. at Le Parc Concord, 20 N. Rivermede Dr.; **JRCC Concord**, 7:30 p.m. 51 Ritin Lane, #5. 416-222-7105, ext. 224

TUESDAY, MARCH 10

Women's Megillah Reading: Shacharit 9:15 a.m. Megillah reading 9:45 a.m. Shaarei Shomayim Congregation.

Jewish Russian Community Centre's Purim Banquet: dinner, entertainment, children's program and dancing. 6 p.m. at the Sephardic Kehillah Centre. Tickets, 416-222-7105 or www.jrcc.org/purim2009.

Continued on page 29

Leadership Sinai Lunch with Leaders
THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2009 • 11:30 A.M. TO 1:30 P.M.

Featuring Caryn Lerner
President & Chief Executive Officer
Holt Renfrew

Leadership Sinai is a growing community of dynamic young philanthropists and volunteer leaders working to advance the mission of the Mount Sinai

Join us for lunch at an exclusive opportunity to attend a Leadership Sinai event.

11:30 a.m. to 12 noon
Light Lunch and Mingle

12 noon - 1 p.m.
Caryn Lerner Speaks
Followed by Q & A

1 to 1:30 p.m.
Networking over coffee and dessert
Informal Q & A with Caryn Lerner

Cost $30

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For more information, contact Mindy Webber
t 416-586-8203 ext. 2075
mwebber@mtsinai.on.ca

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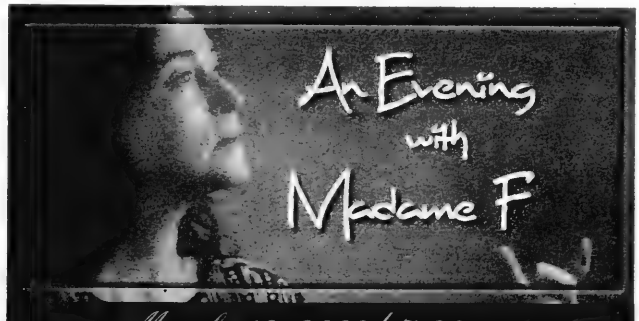

March 12, 2009 / 7:30pm
Leah Posluns Theatre
4588 Bathurst Street, Toronto
Artist talk back to follow

$18 general admission; $36 preferred seating
To reserve seats, please call Hannah Schwartz at 416.635.2883 x. 5153 or email hschwartz@ujafed.org

This original musical drama was inspired by the story of Jewish Holocaust Survivor Paula Lenchin, who, as a youth, performed in the women's orchestra of Auschwitz. Dr. Stevens, a classically trained pianist and multidisciplinary artist, takes on the persona of an elderly Madame F, reflecting on her experiences in the infamous concentration camp.

special student performance at 10am, free of charge

What's New

Continued from page 28

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation hosts a Japanese Purim seudah at 5 p.m. Reserve, 416-7893213.

Chabad Lubavitch of Markham presents Purim at the Circus. Megillah 4:45 p.m., party 5:15 p.m. $4 per person. www.chabadmarkham.org.

OTHER PURIM EVENTS

Beth Tzedec Congregation presents The Las Vegas Megillah: What Happens in Shushan Stays in Shushan, an original Purim musical theatre celebration in support of Jewish Family and Child. $10, children $2. March 7, 8 p.m., March 8, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and March 9, 8 p.m. 416-781-3514

Thursday, March 5

CHASSIDIC CLASSICS

Mekorot presents Chassidic Classics with **Rabbi Michael Skobac**. Study the works of **Rabbi Shalom Noach Brozofsky**. This class will study selected readings geared toward personal spiritual growth. Thursdays, March 5-26, 9:45-11 a.m. at Ulpanat Orot School, 45 Canyon Ave. $45. www.mekorot.ca or 416-877-2050

YOUTH OPEN HOUSE

Beth Emeth Synagogue hosts a wine and cheese open house for parents interested in youth programs. 7 p.m. Free babysitting. RSVP, 416-633-3838, ext 229.

FEMICIDE IN THE CONGO

Women's College Hospital presents **Eve Ensler** on "Creating a Women's Revolution" a first-hand account of mass rape and femicide in the Congo. 7 p.m. at 101 College St. Tickets, $12.50. 416-979-8849 or www.uofttix.ca

Friday, March 6

OPEN MINDS OPEN DOORS

Temple Kol Ami hosts "Open Minds Open Doors Shabbat" a service and Oneg Shabbat. **Naseem Mahdi**, of the Maple Muslim community, speaks. 7:45 p.m. 905-709-2620

MUSICAL LEGACY SERIES

Temple Sinai Congregation presents A Shared Heritage: Jewish Texts for Choir, with the Toronto Choral Artists with **Cantor Gershon Silins**. 8 p.m. 416-487-4161

Saturday, March 7

MUSICAL EVENING

Congregation Bnai Torah, presents an evening of light classical music featuring **Daniel** and **Carey Domb** on cello and guitar. 8 p.m. $12 in advance, $15 at the door. Reserve, 416-226-3700.

A CHORAL CELEBRATION

Join the Beth Tikvah Choir and Musical Ebraica, an Ottawa choir, for an evening of song. 8 p.m. Free. 416-221-3433, ext. 303, or esther@bethtikvah.on.ca

COMEDY NIGHT AT KST

An evening of comedy with **Marc Weiner**. Laugh as he tells of the confusion and uncertainty he encountered in the process of becoming an Orthodox Jew. 8:30 p.m. at Kehillat Shaarei Torah Synagogue. $36. Reserve, 416-229-2600, ext. 3.

Sunday, March 8

TANACH IN OUR TIME

Torah in Motion hosts "The People and the Book: Tanach in Our Time" with **Rabbi Dr. Joshua Berman**, of Bar-Ilan University, **Rabbi Nathaniel Helfgot**, of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, **Yael Unterman**, author of Nehama Leibowitz: Teacher and Bible Scholar, and **Rebecca Winter**, Stern graduate program in Talmud studies. 9:15 a.m.-1:20 p.m. Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. www.torahinmotion.com

WOMEN CELEBRATED

Na'amat Canada commemoration International Women's Day with "An Afternoon Tea with Women Who Inspire Us." Panel includes **Rachael Turkienicz**, **Fran Saltzman** and **Erin Shapero** on "Women, Past, Present and Future." 1 p.m. at the Borochov Cultural Centre. Tickets, 416-636-5425, or naamat@bellnet.ca.

HORROR AND HEROISM

Jewish Theological Seminary presents an afternoon of study on "Haman, Horror and Heroism" with **Rabbi David Hoffman** on "Jewish Survival: How Scared Should We Be?" and **Amy Kalmanofsky** on "Queen Esther: Fantasy or Nightmare?" 2-4 p.m. at Beth David Synagogue, Free. 416-633-5500

IRWIN COTLER SPEAKS

Temple Sinai Congregation presents **Irwin Cotler** on "The Gathering Storm," current issues concerning Jews and Canadians. 7 p.m. To register, 416-487-3281 or e-mail education@templesinai.net.

Monday, March 9

RETAINING MEMORY

Baycrest Centre presents "Beat Memory Loss with Technology" with psychologist **Brian Richards** speaking about how electronic memory aids and other technologies can help people remain independent as they age. 1:30-3 p.m. Register, 416-785-2500, ext. 3374, or lkamenitz@baycrest.org.

Tuesday, March 10

IRAN, ISRAEL AND THE U.S.

The Speakers Action Group presents **David Menashri**, of Tel Aviv University, and **Stewart Bell** on "Iran, Israel and the United States: New Administration, Old Challenges." Noon at Fogler, Rubinoff, 95 Wellington St. W. $20, reservation required, 416-488-7468.

STROH ZIONISM SERIES

Rabbi Michael Stroh begins a series on Zionism and the Idea of Israel. 7:30 p.m. Non-members $5. 905-889-2252, ext. 5

Wednesday, March 11

MORNING CLASSES

Join Melton Adult Mini School morning courses on Israeli Society as Seen Through Modern Israeli Literature and Ten Tough Torah Questions at Beth Emeth Synagogue. Register, 416-789-7400.

TANENZAPF LECTURE

Carl Ehrlich delivers Beit Rayim's **Rabbi Sol Tanenzapf** Memorial lecture. 7:30 p.m. at the Reena Battle Centre, 927 Clark Ave. W. 905-889-0276

Other News

PASSOVER WINE & FOOD

Enjoy "An Evening of Taste with Chef **Eran Marom**," a Passover cooking demonstration and wine pairing tutorial in support of the Toronto Partnership Minyan. Thursday, March 19, 7:30 p.m. Reserve by March 12. torontopartnership minyan@gmail.com

NA'AMAT WINE TASTING

Club Aviva, Na'amat Canada, hosts a wine tasting with **Rabbi Mordechai Levin**. Thursday, March 12, 7:30-10 p.m. at the Borochov Centre. $18 in advance,$25 at the door. Tickets, 416-636-5425.

SING FOR THE CHILDREN

Support Chai Lifeline Canada at a concert featuring **Cantor Yizchak Meir Helfgot**, with symphony orchestra; **Cantor Benjamin Maisner**'s Toronto Choral Ensemble; pianist **Yaron Gershovsky**; and **Yisroel Lamm**; and the Philharmonic Experience. March 16, 7:30 p.m. at Roy Thomson Hall. www.chaiconcert.com

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child Service. 4600 Bathurst St. Call **Shawna** 416-638-7800, ext. 215, for info and registration. www.jfandcs.com.

When You're About to Separate: What to Tell The Kids, a workshop for parents about to separate or in the early stages of separation on how to best meet your child's needs. Tuesday, March 10, 9:30 a.m.-noon. at the Promenade Mall, #313.

Adolescents and Divorce: A workshop for parents who have adolescents and are going through a separation or divorce. Wednesday, March 11, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green Bldg.

FOR SENIORS

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC, enjoy an inter-generational lunch, Thursday, March 19, noon. Free. Pre-register, 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Beth Tikvah Friendship Group's Purim Party takes place Thursday, March 12, 2-4 p.m. dance and sing with **Rita** and **Max**. $10. Reservations, 416-221-3433.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Casino Rama, Wednesday, March 11. Call Tuesday-Thursday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

"Synagogues of Europe" with **Corey Keeble**. Tuesday, March 10, 10-11:30 a.m. $3, non-members $6.

Purim Lunch and Concert, Wednesday, March 11, 12-2: p.m. $13, non-members $16.

WAGMAN CENTRE

55 Ameer Ave. 416-785-2500.

"Healthy Eating to Reduce Your Risk of Cancer" with **Tanya Giaquinto**. $2. Register, ext. 2262.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Annual MNjcc Purim carnival, Great prizes, costume contests, carnival booths, mishloach manot. Sunday, March 8, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. $5, $10 per family at the door. Ext. 154.

Congregation Shir Libeynu and the MNjcc present Purimania: A Grown-up Celebration of the Adventures of Queen Esther. Saturday, March 14, 8 p.m. $5. Reservations, 416-465-5488 or shirlibeynu@yahoo.ca.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Purim Family Fun Day, Sunday, March 8, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. All facilities open including gym, pool, arts and crafts, sing-song, Discovery Museum, face-painting, fun centre and more. Come in costume and be part of Purim fashion show.

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Bridal Registry

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Arnold Urbas	Feb 14/09	10 Torresdale Ave
Joseph Heiferling	Feb 12/09	596 York Hill Blvd
Toby Kashtan	Feb 11/09	200 Dawes Rd
Lynn Romberg	Feb 15/09	9 Deer Park Cres
Henry Cassel	Feb 15/09	3560 Bathurst St
Hy Day	Feb 17/09	3705 Bathurst St
Reva Wolfson	Feb 16/09	5400 Steeles Ave W
Norman Speevak	Feb 13/09	5740 Cavendish Blvd
Bronia Waksbaum	Feb 17/09	137 Searle Ave
Hilda (Buddy) Tick	Feb 17/09	170 Red Maple Rd
Esther Baine	Feb 17/09	550 Cummer Ave
Renee Grosberg	Feb 18/09	1 Emerald Lane
Sylvia Michael	Feb 18/09	270 Brighton Ave
Leonard Katz	Feb 19/09	63 St. Clair Ave W
Harold Minden	Feb 18/09	407 Walmer Rd
Max Tollinsky	Feb 19/09	866 Sheppard Ave W
Monte Silverstone	Feb 17/09	669 Charles St
Shirley Siegal	Feb 19/09	3171 Bathurst St
Elise Fuller-Ciebleman	Feb 19/09	10 Miriam Garden Way
Helen Fonberg	Feb 21/09	35 Wynford Heights Cr
Sydney Faibish	Feb 22/09	8 Erica Avenue
Ben Yomen Simon Prossin	Feb 20/09	10 Torresdale Ave. S.

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Cohen, Ruth	Feb. 12/09	645 Castlefield Ave
Kivovic, Vilma	Feb. 13/09	
Avneri, Chava	Feb. 13/09	136 Waterloo Ave
Sweigman, Molly	Feb. 14/09	866 Sheppard Ave. W
Hochler, Rabbi Solomon N	Feb. 13/09	7 Lonny Court
Ferraris, Meyer	Feb. 15/09	Private
Libes, Julie	Feb. 16/09	6250 Bathurst St
Rosen, Edward	Feb. 16/09	
Frungorts, Evgeny	Feb. 16/09	86 Loire Ave
Jablonski, Josef	Feb. 18/09	866 Sheppard Ave. W.
Pijawka, Aron	Feb. 18/09	25 Invermay Ave
Weitzman, Saul	Feb. 15/09	9 Maxwell St

HEDREW BASIC

Thomas Fogarasi	Feb 21/09	4383 Bathurst St

The family of
JOSEPH HEIFERLING ז"ל
wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and thanks to family, friends and the many community organizations who gave us generous support and kindness during our recent bereavement.
Carl, Rose and Marcel Heiferling

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שישאר ביניו

גידי קורן וחברים

מה יהיה

לבנימין נתניהו ישנן כעת שתי ברירות די ברורות:

הוא יכול להקים די בקלות קואליציה צרה של ששים וחמישה חברי כנסת מן הימין. לפי דברי יודעי דבר הוא מתעב את האלטרנטיבה הזאת משום שהוא יודע שהיא תבודד את ישראל ותביא להתנגדות עולמית. מה גם שהוא יתחייב לחזק את הישוב היהודי בגדה וייאלץ להתנגד לקונסנסוס העולמי של "שתי מדינות לשני עמים". שלא לדבר ששוחד רב יצטרך להינתן למפלגות הדתיות שטפילותן חוגגת כבר ששים שנה ושרוב הציבור סולד ממנה ברמות של אלרגיה.

האלטרנטיבה השניה שלו היא לשכנע את ציפי לבני להצטרף אליו. לבני הבהירה חד משמעית שלא מדובר בתיקים ובמכוניות וולבו, אלא בעקרונות שהבטיחה לבוחריה, שבראשם ההתחייבות לחלוקת הארץ לשתי מדינות והליכה לקראת שלום. קשה להאמין שלבני תסכים להצטרף לקואליציה שבין קוי היסוד שלה לא תהיה הסכמה ל"שתי מדינות לשני עמים". כל דבר פחות מזה יהיה מבחינתה הצטרפות של קדימה לממשלה ימנית, ואת זה לא עושה רושם שהיא תעשה. אם אפשר ללמוד מהצהרות שאר בחירי קדימה-רובם מסכימים עם מנהיגתם, אם כי יש ביניהם בודדים, כמו מופז, שעושה רושם שהוולבו חשוב להם יותר.

ועל כן מי שסבור שההחלטה היא בידיה של לבני-טועה בגדול. היא כבר החליטה. מי שחייב להחליט הוא נתניהו-האם פניו לשלום, ועל כן לקואליציה רחבה, או שפניו לממשלה ימנית צרה, שהאג'נדה המדינית שלה קרוב לודאי שתהיה לצנינים בעיני ממשל אובמה. וזה לא דבר שישראל יכולה לזלזל בו בשום צורה ואופן. אפשר להגיד על נתניהו הרבה דברים, אבל איש לא יכול לטעון שהוא טיפש, מה עוד שהוא עדין נושא בזכרונו את היהירות שסיימה את הקדנציה הראשונה שלו בטרם עת. על כן סביר להניח שהוא יעשה כל מאמץ אפשרי כדי לא לאבד את האופציה של קואליציה רחבה.

אני כותב את הדברים האלה כשבוע לפני פרסומם. אבל לא עושה לי רושם שנתניהו יסגור על קואליציה ימנית כחודש לפני המועד שהקציב לו הנשיא.

אבל שישאר בינינו.

THE COBA Dance Group- בת שבע קורן

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Obituary

Prossin 'lived and breathed the Jewish people'

'He was an emblem for Israel and the community'

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

It's "poetic" that Ben Prossin, 64, died Feb. 20 as the community ushered in the last Shabbat of Shvat, the month in which Israel celebrates the new year for trees, said Rabbi Howard Morrison, spiritual leader of Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue.

Speaking to the almost 600 people who attended the funeral, held at the synagogue, Rabbi Morrison called Prossin, the executive director of the Jewish National Fund's Toronto region, "a real mensch, a tree of the field."

Born and raised in Glace Bay, N.S., Prossin, a lawyer by training, was involved as a youth in Canadian Young Judaea, was founding director of the Atlantic Jewish Council, served as program director at Young Judaea's Camp Kadimah and was on the executive of such organizations as the Canadian Zionist Federation and United Israel Appeal.

In Toronto, he worked at Canadian Jewish Congress for three years before joining JNF 19 years ago.

Never having married, said Rabbi Morrison, Prossin was in many ways married to the people and to the State of Israel.

"He was an emblem for Israel and the Jewish community in the [Greater Toronto Area.] He lived and breathed the Jewish people."

Rabbi Joseph Kelman, rabbi emeritus of Beth Emeth, said that one of Prossin's greatest virtues was that he was not impressed with himself. "He didn't see himself as great, but rather, a part of a team."

Ben Prossin

While at CJC, Rabbi Kelman said, Prossin worked on behalf of Soviet Jewry, "and he energized the Jewish community to realize that we all must contribute. He taught us that we must work with other Jews [for the well-being] of the community."

Frank Wilson, past JNF Toronto president and JNF's current national vice-president, said that Prossin was devoted to JNF and its cause, "and all his family should be proud of his legacy.

"The man whom we called Gentle Ben was the consummate fundraiser. He was also our mentor. He always had time for people, and he could defuse an awkward situation with wit and charm. He was loyal to a fault, and [always] open to new ideas."

Lil Jacobson, who has worked for 19 years as Prossin's secretary and office manager, was also a close family friend.

She said that JNF was "his life" and two years ago, when he was in hospital for four months, he was kept apprised about everything at the office. "I was there every day keeping him up [to speed].

"He was a dear person, and I find it very strange that he won't come back to the office. [JNF] will never be the same. There will never be another Ben Prossin."

Prossin's nephew, Andrew Prossin, called his uncle his role model.

"He was a true soldier for many causes, and his lifelong priority was Israel and JNF. He should also be remembered for his thoughtfulness, kindness, sense of humour and mischief."

With the family now far-flung, Andrew Prossin said that this was the first time in 10 years they have all been able to get together at one time. "Uncle Benny did what he did best. He brought people together."

Prossin was brother and sister-in-law to Albert and Andrea Prossin; Rita Aronson; Sylvia and Irving Brown; the late Molly and Donny Mallman and Hy Aronson.

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Purim incomplete without hamantashen

By SUE EPSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Purim is celebrated in Jewish communities around the world each year on the 14th day of Adar. The festival is based on the story told in the Book of Esther, in which the beautiful and brave Queen Esther and her uncle, Mordechai, save their people from the twisted genocidal plot of the wicked vizier of Persia, Haman.

The order of the day is costumes, giving gifts of food, and historically, a good amount of drinking. The Talmud instructs that one should consume enough alcohol to render one unable to distinguish between "Bless Mordechai" and "Curse Haman."

Part of the Purim atmosphere in Israel is seeing children and adults in costume, walking through the neighbourhood, giving baskets and plates filled with hamantashen and other goodies to family, friends and neighbours. Purim is a major event, with many businesses closed, and even the bus drivers dress in costume.

Although it is traditional to have a Purim seudah, or festive meal, on Purim day, there are no specific traditions regarding the food, as there are on other holidays. Some people serve a long coiled challah or an especially long braided one to symbolize the rope that was used to hang Haman; some serve turkey as a symbol of King Achashverosh, whose kingdom stretched from India (Hodu, or Turkey, in Hebrew) to Ethiopia; and some serve a vegetarian meal such as Esther might have eaten, since she ate only vegetarian dishes in the king's palace to maintain kashrut. Kreplach are also often eaten at the seudah to symbolize Haman's three-cornered hat.

Since no celebration of Purim would be complete without delicious baked goods and other sweets, diets are on hold for most people. But whatever type of menu is served, the one traditional food of Purim is hamantashen.

Here are two very different but delicious hamantashen recipes.

ALMOND HAMANTASHEN

This recipe from Eileen Goltz is more time-consuming than many hamantashen recipes, but the compliments you'll receive will make it worth it!

1/2 cup chopped blanched almond slivers
2 1/2 cups flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/8 tsp. salt
3/4 cup cold unsalted butter or margarine, cut into small pieces
1/2 cup sugar
1 large egg
1 large egg white
2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
1/4 tsp. almond extract
1/8 tsp. very finely grated lemon zest

Filling

7 to 8 oz. marzipan or almond paste (see note)
1 large egg white
1 1/2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
water
1 to 2 drops food colouring (optional)
1 1/2 to 2 tbsp. powdered sugar

To prepare dough, place almonds in a food processor fitted with a steel blade and process until finely ground. Add flour, baking powder and salt. Process in on/off pulses for about 15 seconds longer, or until the ingredients are well blended. Sprinkle the butter over the dry ingredients. Process in on/off pulses until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. In a small bowl, use a fork to beat together sugar, egg, egg white, lemon juice, almond extract and lemon zest. Add egg mixture to the processor and process for 30 seconds, or until ingredients are incorporated and dough begins to mass around the blade – be careful not to over process.

Turn dough out of the processor and divide in half. Roll out each half to a scant 1/4-in. thick between sheets of parchment paper, being sure to smooth out any creases in the underside of the dough. Stack dough sheets on a large tray or baking sheet and refrigerate for about 15 minutes, or until cold but not stiff.

To prepare filling, combine marzipan, egg white, lemon juice and food colouring (if used) in the food processor. Add 1 teaspoon water and process until the mixture is smooth and well blended. If mixture is still too dry to hold together, add enough additional water (1 to 2 tbsp.) to soften and smooth it.

Continued on page 36

Beth Tikvah Synagogue - 3080 Bayview Ave. - Toronto M5N 5L3

LUNCH & LEARN TUESDAYS

Lunch at 12:15 pm - Learn at 12:45 pm SPRING 2009

April 21 - Ellen Roseman
Tips for Tracking, Saving and Investing Your Money. Now that we're in an economic downturn, it's more important than ever to spend less and save more. Ellen Roseman has been writing about these topics for many years and has a few tricks up her sleeve. She will give best practices on smart money management in her talk. Ellen Roseman is a personal finance and consumer affairs columnist with the Toronto Star's business section and previously spent two decades at the Globe and Mail.

April 28 - Dr. Jacques Gauthier
is an international lawyer who completed his Ph.D. thesis relating to the status of Jerusalem in international law at the University of Geneva in 2007. He will discuss the delicate issues connected to the question of sovereignty over the Old City of Jerusalem.

May 5 - William Thorsell,
CEO of the Royal Ontario Museum. 'The Dead Sea Scroll Exhibit in Toronto – Behind the Scenes.' The Toronto exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls will run from June 27 2009 – January 9, 2010. Exhibit was created by joint efforts of the ROM and the Israel Antiquities Authority.

May 12 - 'Winston Churchill and the Jews.'
Our resident historian, **Gerald Ziedenberg,** tackles this fascinating area of history with expertise and sensitivity.

May 19 - Meir Shalev
is one of Israel's leading authors. **A Pigeon and A Boy**, published in 2007 won the Brenner Prize, Israel's highest literary recognition. Already translated into 17 languages, this is a mesmerizing novel of two love stories separated by half a century but connected by one enchanting act of devotion. Reviewed by **Rabbi Avraham Feder.**

May 26- Kirpans, Kippahs, Kashrut and other Krazy Topics
in the Canadian Courts: Ken Krupat discusses Canadian legal decisions affecting minority religious rights. What has been decided? What will the Courts be grappling with in the next few years?

June 2 - The Shanghai Jewish Ghetto
How 20,000 Jews escaped Nazi occupied Europe and made their way to the safe haven of Shanghai. Sculptor, artist and designer **Ian Leventhal** has made 18 trips to Shanghai over the last six years, exploring Jewish-Chinese history. In 2003 he received the Queen's Jubilee Medal for his work in saving the Jewish Ghetto area in Shanghai from certain destruction.

June 9 - 'Yiddish in Canada
past, present and future' with animated speaker **Rebecca Margolis**, assistant professor in the Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Program at the University of Ottawa, where her courses include Yiddish culture as well as Holocaust studies.

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Susie Fishbein cooks up a storm in Toronto

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

On Jan. 14, more than 250 Toronto women braved the cold to attend a warm and inspiring cooking demonstration co-hosted by Uptown Chabad and Chabad on the Avenue, featuring celebrity chef and cookbook author Susie Fishbein. The audience "ate up" every word as Fishbein shared her secrets on how to make kosher cooking easy and elegant.

The author of six cookbooks in seven years, Fishbein's books have sold more than 350,000 copies worldwide. Her latest book, Kosher by Design Lightens Up (Artscroll), offers "fabulous food for a healthier lifestyle" with 145 brand new recipes and 160 colour photographs by John Uher. A helpful feature is the commentary throughout the book by certified nutritional expert Bonnie Taub-Dix, spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association, who acted as the nutrition consultant for the book.

Kosher by Design Lightens Up is not about deprivation. It's about blending an array of foods of varying colours, flavours and textures with a bouquet of nutrients to please both your palate and your desire to feel good. The book is packed with useful information, delicious options and simple concepts for foods loaded with style and panache. You'll find recipes for unusual dishes such as Rice Cracker Slaw, Japanese Udon Noodle Soup, and Argentinean Bison Steaks, as well as soon-to-be favourites such as Garlic Burgers, Lebanese Salad and Bruschetta Chicken.

The audience was impressed by Fishbein's culinary skills and relaxed approach to entertaining in front of a large audience as she demonstrated a variety of recipes from some of her previous books. The menu included Creamy Chummos with Steeped Tomatoes, Winter White Soup, Salmon Primavera, Steamed Thai Sole Rolls, and Warm Apple & Pear Fruit Beggar's Purse. She also offered terrific tips on simple, yet elegant presentations (serve the hummus in a martini glass; the salmon makes a spectacular centrepiece if served whole). She also talked about some of her favourite kitchen gadgets: an electric deep fryer (she has four of them) and a mandolin for slicing vegetables paper-thin (for her Salmon Primavera).

Fishbein recommended that cooks should have "a menu of five or six items that are in your comfort zone" and the recipes should come from "a cookbook you can trust." She encouraged the audience to get their kids into the kitchen as this helps expose them to different foods. When kids help prepare a recipe, they've invested in the cooking process and are more likely to eat the food that's been prepared. Fishbein said that her children get a kids' choice meal once a week.

Chana Gansburg, one of the co-ordinators of the event, told me: "Women like to talk about food, so this event was an ideal way to get Jewish women in the Toronto area together to enjoy a night out and to create awareness in the community about Chabad's projects."

From the enthusiasm of the women I spoke with as we nibbled and noshed together, this goal was certainly accomplished. For more information about Chabad, contact chana@chabadavenue.com or call 416-546-8770. You might even get an invitation for Shabbat dinner!

Here are the recipes for some of the delicious dishes Susie Fishbein demonstrated that night, as well as one I chose from Kosher by Design Lightens Up. Enjoy!

WINTER WHITE SOUP
Source: Kosher by Design Entertains

2 tbsp. olive oil
1 large leek, white and pale green parts only, sliced
4 medium parsnips, peeled, cut into 1-inch chunks
1/2 turnip, peeled, cut into 1-inch chunks
1/2 stalk celery, sliced
5 cups fresh chicken or vegetable stock
1 1/2 cups soy milk
1/8 tsp. ground white pepper
1/4 tsp. fine sea salt
pesto, store-bought or homemade

Place the olive oil in a large pot over medium-low heat. When the oil is hot, add the leek and slowly cook for 4-5 minutes, until it is shiny and soft but not brown. Add the parsnips, turnip and celery. Saute for 6-7 minutes longer.

Add the stock and turn the heat to medium. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 15-20 minutes, or until the vegetables are soft. Add the soy milk, white pepper and salt.

Use an immersion blender, or transfer in batches to a blender, to blend until completely smooth. Ladle into bowls. Garnish with 1/2 teaspoon pesto in the centre of each bowl. Swirl with the tip of a knife. Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

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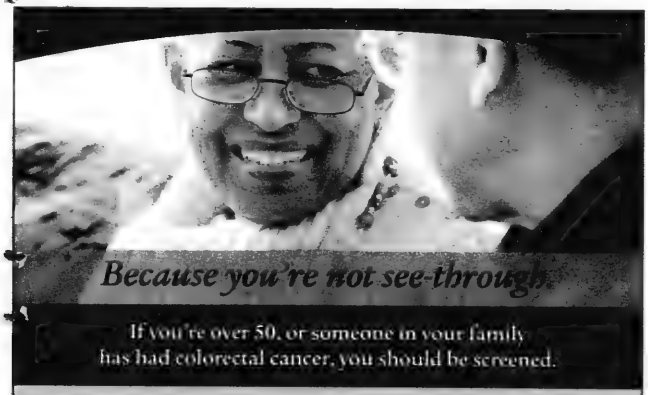
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Foods that help you feel better

Continued from page 34

PAREVE PESTO

2 cups fresh basil leaves
1 clove garlic
1 tbsp. pine nuts
2 tbsp. walnuts
3 tbsp. good quality extra virgin olive oil
fine sea salt
freshly ground black pepper

In the bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade, process the basil, garlic, pine nuts and walnuts. Drizzle in the oil. Season with salt and pepper. Can be kept covered in the refrigerator for 1 week. To keep the pesto from changing colour, top it off with 1/2-in. olive oil. Pour off the extra oil and stir before serving.

SALMON PRIMAVERA
Source: Kosher by Design Entertains

2 1/2-3 lb. wild Pacific or sockeye salmon fillet
salt
freshly ground pepper
Dijon mustard or thick honey mustard
1 small zucchini, with skin, thinly sliced
1 small yellow squash, with skin, thinly sliced
2 Roma or plum tomatoes, thinly sliced
1/4 cup unflavoured breadcrumbs or panko crumbs
2 tbsp. chopped fresh dill
2 tbsp. olive oil

Preheat oven to 375. Season the salmon fillet with salt and pepper. Brush an even, thick coating of the mustard all over the salmon.

Place the salmon on a parchment- or foil-lined baking sheet. Place the fish horizontally in front of you. Starting at the left end of the fillet, lay a column of overlapping slices of the zucchini on top of the salmon.

On the next row, lay a column of overlapping slices of the squash; they should be overlapping the zucchini a bit as well. On the next row, lay a column of tomatoes; they should slightly overlap the squash. Begin again with the zucchini, followed by the squash and the tomato. Continue in this fashion until the whole fillet is covered.

In a small bowl, mix the breadcrumbs, dill and olive oil. Sprinkle over the top of the vegetables.

Bake for 30 to 35 minutes. Remove one of the vegetables in the thickest part of the fillet and test to make sure the fish is done, and then cover it back up with the vegetables.

Serve hot or at room temperature. Can be refrigerated overnight and brought to room temperature the next day. Yield: 8 to 10 servings.

PISTACHIO-CHERRY BISCOTTI
Source: Kosher By Design Lightens Up

Cherries, whether fresh or dried, are exploding with more than just flavour. They get their beautiful red colour from anthocyanins, which may reduce inflammation and help decrease the risk of heart disease, as well as reducing the pain of arthritis and gout. Quercetin, a flavonoid in cherries, may protect your heart, and beta-sitosterol, a plant sterol, may reduce cholesterol levels. Cherries also contain vitamins A and C as well as calcium, iron, potassium and fibre.

1 cup whole wheat flour
1 cup all-purpose flour
2/3 cup sugar
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. fine sea salt
2 tbsp. canola oil
1 large egg plus 1 egg white (from large egg), lightly beaten
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
1 tsp. orange zest
1/4 cup orange juice (from medium orange)
1/2 cup dried cherries, coarsely chopped
1/3 cup (2 oz.) chopped good quality semi-sweet chocolate or chocolate chips
1/3 cup shelled pistachios, coarsely chopped

Preheat oven to 350. Cover a cookie sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, at medium speed, combine the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Add the oil, egg and egg white, vanilla, orange zest and orange juice. Mix until a loose dough forms. Do not over-mix as whole wheat flour will toughen. Stir in the cherries, chocolate and pistachios.

Transfer the dough to the cookie sheet and form into a long, flat log about 14x4-in. wide. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until outside of log is baked but log is still soft. Remove from oven and cool for 5 minutes.

Using a bread knife or a serrated knife, slice the dough into 1/2-in. thick slices. Arrange the slices on the cookie sheet and return to the oven to bake for an additional 10 minutes. Flip the biscotti and return them to the oven for a final 10 minutes. Cool completely and store in an airtight container. Makes 18 biscotti.

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Enjoy eating Haman's three-cornered hat

Continued from page 32

Preheat oven to 350. Generously grease several baking sheets or line them with parchment paper and set aside. Remove one sheet of dough from the refrigerator and carefully peel off the bottom sheet of parchment paper, then replace it loosely. Turn dough over and peel off top sheet of paper. Cut dough into rounds using a 2- or 2 1/2-in. round cutter or rim of a drinking glass.

Working with one dough round at a time, place a small, rounded 1/2 tsp. marzipan filling in the centre and fold up dough to form triangle. The marzipan should mound just slightly in the centre of the "hat."

Repeat with each round, spacing the cookies 2 in. apart on the prepared baking sheets. If the rounds become soft and difficult to handle at any point, slide the cookies and parchment paper onto a tray or baking sheet and refrigerate until they firm up again.

Gather dough scraps and roll out between sheets of paper again. Cut out the cookies, transfer to baking sheets, and fill and shape until all the dough is used. Repeat the process with the second half of the dough.

Place hamantashen in centre of oven and bake 10 to 12 minutes, or until the cookies are just barely tinged with brown at the edges. Remove from the oven and allow the cookies to stand for 1 to 2 minutes. Using a spatula, transfer cookies to wire racks and let stand until cooled completely. Sprinkle the tops with a generous sifting of powdered sugar. Store cookies in an airtight container for up to a week. Freeze for longer storage. (Makes about 3 dozen)

GINGERBREAD HAMANTASHEN

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp. salt
2 tsp. ground ginger
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. allspice
1/4 tsp. cloves
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. baking soda
3/4 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup margarine
1 large egg
1/2 cup molasses
1 tsp. vanilla
apricot jam for filling

Mix together the flour, salt, ginger, cinnamon, allspice, cloves, nutmeg and baking soda.

Use an electric mixer tocream together the brown sugar and margarine. Add the egg, mixing it in, then the molasses and the vanilla.

Add the dry ingredients and mix until well combined. This will make a very soft dough. Turn it out onto a work surface, cut in half and form into 2 flat squares. Wrap each piece in plastic wrap and refrigerate for a minimum of one hour (can be done a day or two ahead and kept in the refrigerator).

Preheat oven to 350. Generously flour worktop (I like to roll this dough out on parchment paper because it tends to stick a little as it's so soft). Roll the dough approximately 1/4 in. thick. Use a cutter to cut 2- to 3-in. circles. Place about 1 tsp. of filling in the centre of each circle and fold up three sides, pinching to form triangles. Place on a baking sheet lined with parchment.

Bake for 9-11 minutes, until the edges are just starting to brown. Cool. Makes about 3 dozen.

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Kenney praises U.S. for boycott of Durban II

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Now that the United States has followed Canada and Israel's lead in boycotting the upcoming Durban II world anti-racism conference over concerns about anti-Semitism, Canada's citizenship, immigration and multicultural minister, Jason Kenney, said he hopes other countries will do the same.

"I would like to believe that we had some positive impact, and certainly the recent decision of the Obama administration, I am confident, will be followed by other European allies," Kenney told The CJN on Sunday in Toronto, referring to the followup conference to the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism, known as Durban II.

The 2001 human rights meeting in Durban, South Africa, singled Israel out for criticism and compared Zionism to racism. Israel and the United States walked out.

Kenney – who was meeting with representatives from Jewish groups, including Canadian Jewish Congress and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, to brief them on last month's inaugural conference in London of the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism – said he hopes to deepen his close relationship with the Jewish community.

"Canada under the Harper government takes a zero tolerance approach to anti-Semitism, both domestically and internationally, and we understand the direct connection between Holocaust denial, anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism," Kenney said.

He added that when he attended the Feb. 17 London conference, the Obama administration had not yet opted to pull out of the Durban II conference, set to take place in Geneva next month.

The CJC released a statement that applauded last week's decision by the United States to join Canada and Israel in refusing to participate in the United Nations Durban Review Conference.

"In the preparatory conferences for Durban II, it has already become clear that Israel would be singled out among all the nations of the world for condemnation… Durban II has already become nothing more than a venue for the most pernicious and vile anti-Semitism," CJC co-president Rabbi Reuven Bulka said.

Congress CEO Bernie Farber added that the refusal of democratic countries such as Canada, Israel and the United States to take part sends a message of tolerance and hope to the international community.

"We now call on all other democratic countries to be true to their pluralistic values. They should follow Canada's lead, together with Israel and the United States, in dissociating from the hatefest that Durban II has already become," Farber said.

Kenney told The CJN that anti-Semitism in Canada is fuelled by "anti-Zionist rhetoric" and has become "almost epidemic in Canada."

But he said he hopes that the London conference last month will push other members of the international community to actively combat anti-Semitism, starting with a boycott of the Durban II conference.

Continued on page 39

RESPECT AND REMEMBRANCE AT YAD VASHEM

During a visit to Jerusalem earlier this week, Canadian Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon participated in a memorial ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance at Yad Vashem. During his three-day visit to the region, Cannon met with leaders of Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority. In Jerusalem, he met with Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu. Cannon said his meetings with the Israeli and Palestinian leaders "will serve to reaffirm Canada's full support for reaching their goal of a comprehensive peace agreement. We recognize the efforts [PA] President Mahmoud Abbas and [PA]Prime Minister Salam Fayyad have made to improve the security situation in the West Bank. Canada will support only those Palestinian leaders who understand that civil order and an end to terrorism are essential conditions for the fulfillment of Palestinian national ambitions. Our government continues to support Israel's right to protect its citizens and defend itself." [Isaac Harari photo, courtesy of Yad Vashem]

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Gadhafi blames Israel

Libyan President Muammar Gadhafi said Israel is to blame for the crisis in Darfur. Gadhafi, president of the African Union, said that "foreign forces," including Israel, are to blame for the genocide in the Sudan region. "We discovered that some of the main leaders of the Darfur rebels have opened offices in Tel Aviv and hold meetings with the military there to add fuel to the conflict fire," the Libyan state news agency Jana quoted Gadhafi as saying. Gadhafi urged the International Criminal Court to stop proceedings to decide whether to issue a warrant for the arrest of Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who is accused of masterminding the genocide. "Why do we have to hold President Bashir or the Sudanese government responsible when the Darfur problem was caused by outside parties, and Tel Aviv, for example, is behind the Darfur crisis?" he said.

Rockets in Lebanon

Four rockets were discovered in southern Lebanon, on the border with Israel, Lebanese security officials said. The rockets were found in a region facing the Golan Heights. The discovery comes days after two rockets were fired from Lebanon at northern Israel for the third time this year. The attacks sparked Israeli retaliation. No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Biblical markings found

Seal impressions that date back to the reign of the biblical King Hezekiah were found in southern Jerusalem.

Archeologists from the Israel Antiquities Authority unearthed a large building on the site in the village of Umm Tuba that dates to the time of the First and Second Temples. The royal seal impressions were discovered in the building. Pits, agricultural installations and subterranean silos were discovered hewn inside the courtyard. In addition, a potter's kiln, a large columbarium cave with a rock-hewn hiding refuge and pottery vessels also were discovered inside the complex. The pottery vessels that were found in the ruins of the building suggest it dates to the First Temple period in the eighth century BCE.

Missiles on nuclear site?

Syria built a missile facility on the site of an alleged nuclear reactor, according to Associated Press. Syria's nuclear chief reportedly told the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency that either a control centre or a launching pad was built on the site of what was believed to be a nascent nuclear reactor that was bombed by the Israeli Air Force in September 2007. The IAEA reported earlier last week that traces of uranium and graphite, both used in a nuclear reactor, were found at the site.

Gaza inquiry named

A committee was appointed to investigate the handling of the resettlement of Gaza evacuees. The committee, headed by retired Supreme Court judge Eliyahu Matza, also will make recommendations for their resettlement, as well as look at the state of the evacuees' employment and welfare situation.

– with files from JTA

Israeli, Diaspora volunteers to create an eco-farm in India

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN
Israel 21c

TAMIL NADU, India – When 10 Israeli and Diaspora Jews aged 21 to 30 get together on an eco-farm just outside of Tel Aviv this month on their first step to making the world a better place, one of the skills they'll learn is juggling.

But that's only natural for the Leaders for Tikkun Olam (LTO), which aims to balance Jewish values with a desire to make a difference. In July, the group moves to India to assist Indian villagers.

Israeli backpackers in Goa, on the west cost of India, are thought to be "ugly Israelis" by the local population, and one of LTO's goals is to project a positive image of Israel in India and around the world.

The International Jewish Service Corps project in Israel and India, supported by the Foreign Ministry and the Jewish Agency's MASA program, is the brainchild of the Adam LeAdam – International Human Aid NGO, which was founded by former Jewish Agency emissaries Uri Amit and Yarden Tenenbaum about a year ago. They believe the NGO will not only revolutionize the lives of south Indian villagers in the Sadhana Forest region but also create future leaders to pursue similar projects.

"I think that the whole idea of starting a Jewish/Israeli peace corps was somehow inside us years ago," Amit said.

Relying on their experience as Israeli emissaries and in volunteer work in the developing world, "we realized there might be an option, a vision to combine both things – to say there is a call for young, Jewish Israeli leaders to make a change both in Israel itself, but to [also] bring it to the outside world," he said.

The target is to create an eco-farm in Auroville, Tamil Nadu, in southeast India, where local agriculture was destroyed because villagers used methods that polluted water and soil. Working with Indian NGOs, the Centre for Culture and Development in India, and the Sadhana Forest, "we are trying to find a solution by creating an eco-park training centre to teach ecological agriculture, that doesn't use pesticides or create pollution," Tenenbaum said.

But the 10-member team will do even more when they take their "mini-kibbutz" from the Tel Aviv suburbs to India after studying biology and organic farming.

Using their juggling skills as an ice-breaker, they'll interact with people in 11 villages. They plan to teach English, find out what the villagers' problems are and develop future leaders to create a ripple effect of change, even among members of the "untouchable" caste.

"We're not coming on a white horse to save the world, but rather to… answer their needs," Tenenbaum said. In so doing, they hope to change the way Israelis are perceived in India and offer another option to Israeli travellers who previously only sought hedonistic adventures in India.

"We realized that many Israelis know Indian people simply as service providers and hardly have been exposed to real Indian culture. On the other hand, the Indian people think most Israelis are backpackers in Goa – the ugly Israelis. We're trying to create something else, something positive," Amit said.

Tenenbaum added: "The- main problem is that they don't know about the possibility of doing something else in India besides just enjoying themselves. If we give them the opportunity to do something meaningful, people will do it."

The LTO blends the idea of strengthening one's Jewish roots with the concept of tikkun olam. "People are forced to choose whether they are dealing with their Jewish identity and asking themselves what their relationship to Israel is, or following their ideas of tikkun olam, which sometimes have nothing to do with Judaism," Amit said. "We are trying to merge those ideas together."

Once back in Israel, the volunteers will write proposals for volunteer projects in Israel or their own communities, with support from the NGO. The farm in India will also be open to backpackers who want to stop in to help.

"We think Israelis have a lot to offer, a lot of good characteristics that people don't always see – initiative, a willingness to give. They don't just talk about it, they find a way to do it. And one of our goals is to show the world something good that comes out of Israel, not just what they see on TV," Tenenbaum said.

The pair hope to "make the issue of volunteering a trendy one," they said, and are currently spreading the word in India, on various websites, through Hillel offices and on college campuses in Israel and abroad.

Vatican rejects bishop's apology

JTA

ROME — The Vatican dismissed as insufficient Bishop Richard Williamson's apology for making comments minimizing the Holocaust.

Bishop Williamson expressed regret for making the remarks, but did not recant his views.

"The Holy Father and my Superior, Bishop Bernard Fellay, have requested that I reconsider the remarks I made on Swedish television four months ago, because their consequences have been so heavy," Bishop Williamson said in a statement published Feb. 26 by the Zenit Catholic News Agency.

Pope Benedict XVI sparked a furor in January when he reinstated Bishop Williamson and three other excommunicated bishops, all members of the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X, just days after Bishop Williamson told Swedish TV that he believed "the historical evidence is hugely against six million Jews having been deliberately gassed in gas chambers as a deliberate policy of Adolf Hitler." He said no more than a few hundred Jews died in the war.

Bishop Williamson expressed regret for making the remarks.

"Observing these consequences, I can truthfully say that I regret having made such remarks, and that if I had known beforehand the full harm and hurt to which they would give rise, especially to the Church, but also to survivors and relatives of victims of injustice under the Third Reich, I would not have made them," he said.

He concluded, "To all souls that took honest scandal from what I said, before God I apologize. As the Holy Father has said, every act of injust violence against one man hurts all mankind."

The apology "does not seem to respect the conditions" for re-admission into the Church as a clergyman, a Vatican spokesperson said, because it doesn't apologize for the Shoah denial itself.

The founding chair of the International Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, Menachem Rosensaft, also called the apology unacceptable. "Williamson in no way recanted his denial of the Holocaust," he said. "Instead, he merely expressed regret that his public expression of his noxious views called attention to Pope Benedict XVI's ill-advised attempt to rehabilitate him."

Bishop Williamson left Argentina last week after authorities there expelled him for violating the conditions of his work visa. He returned to his native Britain.

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite our readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes. Stories should not exceed 2,000 words.

We must receive your submissions no later than Friday, March 13. E-mail submissions are preferred, but works can also be sent by mail or brought to our office.

E-mail: **info@cjnews.com.** Mail: 1500 Don Mills Rd., Suite 205, Toronto, Ont., M3B 3K4.

Submissions will *not* be returned. Only writers whose work is chosen for publication will be contacted.

Explosive hits Venezuela Jewish community centre

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CARACAS — Assailants threw an explosive at a Jewish community centre last Thursday, the second assault against Venezuela's Jewish community this year. Fortunately, nobody was hurt in the blast.

Abraham Garzon, president of the Jewish Community Centre, told the local Globovision television news channel that a small explosive resembling a pipe-bomb was lobbed at the building in Caracas before dawn on Thursday. The explosion damaged the centre's doors.

"It seems there are people in the country dedicated to sowing terrorism," Garzon said.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack, which immediately reignited fears of increasing anti-Semitism in Venezuela.

A Caracas synagogue was ransacked and vandalized last month. The assailants shattered religious objects, spray-painted "Jews, get out" on the synagogue's walls and stole a computer database containing names and addresses of Jews living in Venezuela.

Authorities have arrested 11 people, including eight police officers, suspected of participating in the first attack. Investigators believe the assailants forced their way into the temple to steal a large amount of cash they believed was inside. The vandalism, authorities say, could have been aimed at turning attention away from the true motive behind the crime.

Last Thursday, Sergio Widder of the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center criticized Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez for failing to take steps to curb anti-Semitism.

Chavez should strongly criticize pro-government websites and newspapers that have carried articles and columns that many Venezuelan Jews perceive as anti-Semitic, he said.

"This is outrageous, it's turning into an escalation," said Widder, the centre's representative for Latin America. "It's the government's responsibility to stop this."

During Israel's offensive in Gaza, Chavez fiercely criticized the Jewish state and ordered the Israeli ambassador out of Venezuela. Protests against the military incursion were held in Caracas, and demonstrators hurled shoes at and sprayed graffiti on the Israeli Embassy.

Chavez, who has repeatedly condemned the Jan. 30 attack on the synagogue, denies being anti-Semitic. The socialist leader says he simply opposes Israeli policies on the Palestinians. He accuses the Israeli government of acting as an arm of Washington.

Women may chant Megillah of Esther for men: rabbi

By YAIR ETTINGER

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Women are allowed to chant the Megillah of Esther on behalf of men if no competent men are available, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the spiritual leader of Israel's Sephardi community, ruled in a landmark decision liable to outrage many of his Ashkenazi counterparts.

Esther is traditionally read in synagogue on the holiday of Purim, which falls next week. And while some rabbis have long permitted women to read the Megillah for other women, most do not allow women to read on behalf of men.

In his weekly Torah class on Saturday night, however, Rabbi Yosef discussed the rules of reading the Megillah and ruled that not only may women read it in front of men, but the men will thereby have fulfilled their obligation to hear the Megillah read.

"It is permissible for a woman to fulfill this obligation on behalf of men," he said, because the obligation to hear the Megillah falls equally on men and women.

Rabbi Yosef said that most rabbis forbid women to read the Megillah on the grounds that men are forbidden to listen to women sing. However, he said, he does not agree that a woman chanting a sacred text falls under the general prohibition regarding singing. The analogy rabbis have drawn between singing and chanting sacred texts has "no value," he declared.

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef

Rabbi Yosef said that women should not read for men if there are men capable of doing the reading. But in a "small community" where there are no men capable of chanting the text properly, it is permissible to bring a woman to read, he ruled.

Rabbi Yosef also said that women could write a kosher Megillah of Esther – another task that most rabbis say can be done only by men. He said that ancient megillot written by women have been found in Yemen, and it would be permissible for women to do so today as well, "to earn a living for their household," since women "were part of the miracle" that the Megillah describes.

In both cases, Rabbi Yosef's rulings were specific to Megillat Esther and do not necessarily apply to other sacred texts, such as the Torah.

British PM signs declaration against anti-Semitism

JTA

LONDON — Britain's prime minister became the first world leader to sign the London Declaration on combating anti-Semitism.

The measure was adopted last month in the British capital by 125 legislators from more than 40 countries at a coalition meeting to combat anti-Semitism.

On signing the declaration, Gordon Brown said, "So many of the principles it enshrines are already things we are doing here in Britain, and while I'm proud of the bold action Britain has taken to combat anti-Semitism – such as improved reporting, prosecutions for anti-Semitic Internet hate and the funding of Holocaust education in schools – there is no room for complacency."

He noted that the department for communities and local government is organizing an event at Beth Shalom, London's Holocaust Centre, to look in detail at how the government can implement the declaration.

Gordon Brown

"I encourage other heads of government to become signatories to this historic agreement," Brown said. "Together, our renewed efforts can rid the world of this ancient virus."

The London Declaration called on legislators to "expose, challenge and isolate political actors who engage in hate against Jews and target the State of Israel as a Jewish collectivity." It also calls on governments to "challenge any foreign leader, politician or public figure who denies, denigrates or trivializes the Holocaust and must encourage civil society to be vigilant to this phenomenon and to openly condemn it."

The London Declaration also urges the United Nations to "reaffirm its call for every member state to commit itself to the principles laid out in the Holocaust Remembrance initiative, including specific and targeted policies to eradicate Holocaust denial and trivialization." It also calls for action on education for the public and the authorities.

European states expected to follow American example

Continued from page 37

Kenney said that Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini has said that "Italy is ready to withdraw, but it wasn't announcing that it was doing so."

He added that Britain is also close to making the decision now that the United States has pulled out.

But the main message Kenney said he wanted to present to the Canadian Jewish community was that his government recognizes that "the new anti-Semitism – that is to say, anti-Semitism taking on the form of anti-Zionism, this notion that Israel is an abomination, that the Jewish people alone have no right to a homeland and that Israel must be destroyed – is [manifesting itself] even here in Canada."

He said that events such as Israeli Apartheid Week, happening this week on campuses worldwide, are efforts to scapegoat and delegitimize the Jewish state.

"[Israel] is not a perfect country, and it is entirely fair, as I said in London, to disagree with particular policies of the Israeli government, but this anti-Zionism is much more profound than that," Kenney said.

"It questions, essentially, the right of Israel to exist as a democratic Jewish state, and for the government of [Prime Minister] Stephen Harper, that is a totally outrageous and unacceptable position."

CJN Profile

Family tradition inspired Bonnie Stern's latest cookbook

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

For food maven Bonnie Stern, Friday night Sabbath dinners are sacrosanct and always will be.

"From a Jewish point of view, it's our night," she explained. "For others, it's goodbye to the work week and hello to the weekend."

With this idea in mind, Stern – one of Canada's most respected culinary authorities – wrote her latest book, Friday Night Dinners, published recently by Random House Canada.

"I wanted to write a family book," said Stern, whose previous 13 books run the gamut from Bonnie Stern's Essentials of Home Cooking to Simply HeartSmart Cooking.

"For me, Friday night dinners, a perfect time to share a meal with family and friends, seemed like a great theme."

Friday Night Dinners is a family affair.

Her son, Mark, a television story producer, took the photographs, while her daughter, Anna, a graduate student in speech pathology at the University of Toronto, assisted her brother.

Stern's husband Raymond Rupert, a physician who knows his way around a kitchen, cheered them on.

Out of respect for the Jewish tradition of Friday night dinners, the recipes in Stern's 309-page volume are kosher friendly and feature chapters on Rosh Hashanah, Passover and Israeli cuisine.

But within this framework, Stern ranges far and wide, offering readers easy-to-follow recipes for Italian, Indian, Asian, Greek, Australian, Middle Eastern, South African, vegetarian, barbecue, fast food, fish and al fresco meals.

Although her parents were not particularly observant or even kosher, Stern was raised on Friday night dinners. And after they died, this tradition was even more important to her.

"At least once a week, it's wonderful to share a family meal," she said, sipping tea and sharing home-baked mandel brot and shortbread/chocolate cookies with a reporter at the Bonnie Stern School of Cooking, a business she has run since 1973. "People who grew up with this tradition are so lucky."

Stern cut her teeth in the kitchen when she was just a little girl, baking cookies and cakes. In Grade 8, she began cooking meals for her family, who appreciated her efforts.

Stern's interest in and dedication to food was whetted by her home economics teacher at Forest Hill Junior High School who, she said, had a considerable influence on her.

As she recalls, her mother, the scion of Polish Jews, was an adventurous cook who had to curb her enthusiasm because no one else in the family shared her proclivity for cutting-edge fare.

Her father, a chartered accountant, was a "plain eater," while she was a "fussy" eater.

"I don't like things that are too rich or complicated," she said.

Looking back, she liked nothing more than poached eggs on toast, lamb chops and carrots, and on Friday nights, brisket, rib roast and apple crisp.

After graduating from high school, Stern earned a BA degree, majoring in English, at the University of Toronto.

She intended to pursue a career as a librarian, but eager for a break, she enrolled in a two-year chef training and food administration course at George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology.

"My parents weren't happy," she said. "They wanted me to continue my academic education. But they also wanted me to be happy."

Back then, food did not have the same social cachet it has now. "It was nothing, not the big thing it is today." Yet Stern was hooked. "Next to reading, the only thing I loved was food."

In retrospect, George Brown made her what she is today.

"I learned cooking techniques and how to be really organized in the kitchen. I did well and gained lots of self-confidence."

Stern worked in several restaurants, in culinary and management positions, after leaving George Brown. Then she landed a job as a cooking demonstrator at the Eaton's department store.

"I was supposed to get people excited about food so they would buy kitchen supplies."

Bonnie Stern

Stern might have remained at Eaton's indefinitely had not one of its suppliers asked her to open a cooking school.

Eventually, she bought out her partners, and today, she offers classes to individuals and corporate groups.

So far this year, she has taught courses on 10 "super" foods, braising meat, Asian and Italian cuisine, fish, cheese and vegetarian cooking.

Later this month, she will teach a challah workshop and the basics of Middle Eastern cooking.

Moroccan, Egyptian and Lebanese food appeals to her, though Stern has never visited Morocco, Egypt or Lebanon.

Five years ago, in keeping with her lifelong passion for literature, Stern formed a book club at her school, inviting local authors to discuss their works with her students and then share a sumptuous meal together.

Since 2004, Stern has also led food tours to Israel.

On her first-ever trip to Israel six years ago, one of her travelling companions, Rabbi Elyse Goldstein, warned her that she might not take kindly to Israeli food.

Stern, however, was blown away by Israel's gastronomic treats.

"I thought the food was incredible. The carrot soup flavoured with cumin. The chicken baked with dried fruits. The phyllo pastry. It was the most interesting food I'd had in years. It's very exotic, yet familiar, and I love the spices and herbs."

Stern was to have led her fourth food tour to Israel last month, but cancelled it due to the war in the Gaza Strip. She hopes to reschedule it.

Apart from her books and cooking school, she has hosted two TV shows, Bonnie Stern Cooks and Bonnie Stern Entertains, and hosts a website featuring recipes and food news.

Even after all these years, Stern enjoys cooking, generally dishing up four family dinners a week.

"I like everyday home cooking," she said.

In this age of fast food and pre-cooked meals, she encourages people to prepare their own meals.

"Cooking is really easy and fun, though food companies lead you to believe that cooking is hard. And, of course, everything tastes better when you share a meal, especially on Friday nights."

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
President

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Behind the scenes of the Cool Jew book tour

By LISA ALCALAY KLUG
Special to The CJN

This Hebrew month, Adar, is best known for the holiday of Purim. It's another great example of that ancient wisdom, "They tried to kill us. We survived. Let's eat." Thus our ancient sages taught, "When Adar arrives, joy increases."

Lisa Alcalay Klug

That makes this an opportune time to look back on what we've been doing the past few months and give it a high five. What have I been up to? Travelling around North America telling jokes. I'm not a standup comedian. I just play one on book tour.

Truth is, my agenda is much wider than merely making Jews laugh. I'm celebrating how cool it is to be Jewish and sharing thoughts on what I call the Jewish cultural revival. You might call it, showing Judaism a good time.

My book, Cool Jew: The Ultimate Guide for Every Member of the Tribe (published by Andrews McMeel) is a comprehensive, loving and irreverent look at Jewish life.

It covers everything from identity, Jewish diversity, cuisine, gear and language to life-cycle events, holidays and spirituality – what I call Kabba Lah Lah for Non-Dummies.

It's been said Cool Jew does for gefilte fish and matzah balls what The Official Preppy Handbook did for plaid and polo, only with much more chutzpah.

We've had a few parties to celebrate. Forty-two to be exact. Soon after Sukkot, I left my home in California for a whirlwind tour that continued through much of January. And I just want to say, dear Canadians, your country has been good to me.

My Canada tour started out at the Ghetto Shul in Montreal, continued at Toronto's Indigo bookstore and was capped off with an amazing night of local talent, a few stolen moments inside the Incredible Bar Mitzvah Machine, an interactive installation created by artist Charles Katz, and some jokes I told at the original Cool Jew Cabaret at the Koffler Centre of the Arts in Toronto.

But that's not all. Random strangers gave me a subway token, carried my things through the turnstile, and even walked me through the Yorkdale Mall to Indigo's door, where another stranger introduced herself to me as "Lisa Klug" – her real name.

The Koffler Centre served adorable blue and white "Cool Jew" cookies, happy-face sugar cookies with rainbow sprinkle yarmulkes and gingerbread Yidden with tallit stripes of white icing.

And the good people at the Koffler are continuing to showcase local artists at ongoing Cool Jew Cabarets (No. 2 was slated for Feb. 15).

CBC Radio One invited me for a live interview with honorary Heeb Jian Ghomeshi, host of Q TV, Arts, Culture, Entertainment, who grew up in Thornhill, Ont.

Our interview is now immortalized on YouTube. And the local Costco stocked Cool Jew, reportedly next to a stack of Art Scroll prayerbooks, which my book jacket spoofs. Now that's divine providence.

Because I keep kosher, friends had warned me, "You're going to starve." Are you kidding me? This was a Jewish book tour. With a dessert bar that kept appearing everywhere I did. I ate gingerbread in Toronto, brownies in Kansas City, chocolate fondue in Scottsdale, Ariz., and cotton candy in San Francisco. I gained 10 pounds. (The curse of the "Book Tour Ten.")

When I wasn't busy snacking, people asked me all kinds of questions like, "Do you have a day job?" Yes, of course. I'm a stay-at-home mom. But without the husband and kids. Actually, I'm a freelance journalist. In other words, my day job requires another day job. Do you need any one-liners in your office?

A true Heebster knows where to be. As Americans celebrated the inauguration of President Barack Obama in Washington, D.C., Cool Jew was there.

Being on tour is its own Twilight Zone. You visit so many places (and eat so much sugar) in such a short period of time that some days you wake up forgetting you're in a foreign country. You know how it goes. You're walking down the street and things feel familiar, but suddenly you're really tripping because those red hexagonal signs you've read all your life as S-T-O-P suddenly say Arret.

Once I realized I was in that one part of North America known as "Kabeck," I figured I'd play along. I started reading all the signs as if I were Lumiere. You know, that talking candelabra from Beauty and the Beast? It was fun. "Park Olympique. Jardin Botanique. Irrigation Colonique." You French know how to make anything sound good.

As the tour continued, people started calling me cool Jew. It's been kind of uncomfortable. I'm not that cool. I'm the dork who wrote the book. But that hasn't stopped people from asking me to evaluate their coolness. They say things like, "Lisa, my name is Mordechai Lefkowitz. Does that make me a cool Jew? Lisa, I'm Moroccan and I speak Yiddish. Am I a cool Jew? Lisa, I'm a shiksa and I love knishes. Does that count?"

My labour of love has done all right. In June, Cool Jew won Honourable Mention in the New York Book Festival. In October/November, I was named Erma Bombeck Humor Writer of the Month. And just weeks ago, Cool Jew was named a finalist in the 2008 National Jewish Book Awards in the category of contemporary Jewish life.

It appears to be the first humour/pop culture title honoured in the 50-year history of the awards. And this month, the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco is debuting an installation I created called Matzo Ball Disco, which incorporates light, music and holograms of flying Jewish stars. It's my Heebster interpretation of a seder plate.

The tour has changed me, perhaps forever. I've become... emboldened. One night, after a reading in Baltimore, I used lipgloss to sticker my book logo onto a massive sign and the image of a tranquil reader in lotus position.

The first full day of the new U.S. president's in office, I slipped Cool Jew into the hands of an Obama puppet at the Washington Monument. I even risked the reprimands of the Secret Service to sneak a giant semblance of my book onto the White House lawn to snap a photo. That's part of the joy of having written this book. Now, nearly every day has the potential of a little Purim... with a lot more chutzpah.

When your book comes out, Alcalay Klug is available for hire... to be you. Learn more about her Cool Jew adventures at her website, www.cooljewbook.com.

Oscars for Holocaust films, but Israeli movie loses

JTA

LOS ANGELES — A Holocaust-related short and a Holocaust-related film won Academy Awards, but an Israeli film again came up short in the quest for best foreign-language film.

Waltz With Bashir, Israel's hopes for its first Oscar, failed to win for best foreign film. It was the eighth time that an Israeli film was nominated for an Academy Award but didn't win.

Ari Folman's animated masterpiece, a psycho-historical investigation into one man's inability to remember what he did during the 1982 Lebanon War, won this year's Golden Globe for best foreign film, and critics and audiences in Israel and around the world have embraced the movie.

Folman's animated psychological drama had also been named by the American National Society of Film Critics as the best overall picture of 2008.

So much for the "experts" or, if you prefer, the peculiar ways of Academy Awards voters: even after Japanese director Yojiro Takita walked off the stage Sunday night clutching the statuette for his film Departures, he acknowledged in a backstage interview that Waltz had been the front-runner all along.

For Israelis, an Oscar win would have meant nearly as much as the country's first Olympic medal.

On Oscar night at the Beverly Hilton, where Israeli diplomats and journalists had gathered, the festive mood turned grim when Departures was named the top foreign language film.

Israel's consul general in Los Angeles, Yaakov Dayan, didn't hide his disappointment.

"I've been in Los Angeles for two years," Dayan said. "Last year, Beaufort was nominated but didn't win. This year, it was Waltz With Bashir, and it didn't win. Maybe I'll have to resign before we can take home an Oscar."

Waltz with Bashir was good enough to win a Golden Globe but not an Oscar.

Toyland, a 14-minute German film that was four years in the making, won the Oscar for best live-action short.

Set in a small German town in the winter of 1942, the film follows the friendship between two six-year-old boys, the Aryan Heinrich and the Jewish David Silberstein.

When the Silberstein family is about to be deported, Heinrich asks his mother where his friend is going. She tells him that David is taking a trip to Toyland. An intrigued Heinrich sneaks along for the ride when the town's Jews are packed onto a train.

"Well, it was a drama, but it was a story I really wanted to tell – a film about ignorance, truth and the history of my country," director and producer Jochen Alexander Freydank told Moving Pictures magazine.

"Shooting this film was one of the most rewarding experiences in my film life," he added.

"Growing up behind the Berlin Wall, I always dreamt about making films. But I never, ever thought that a film of mine might be nominated for an Oscar one day. It still feels a bit unreal, I must say. But makes me very, very happy."

Actress Kate Winslet won for her role in The Reader, in which she plays an illiterate former SS concentration camp guard whose teenage lover is unaware of her Nazi past.

Some observers have panned the film for trivializing the Holocaust.

"Essentially, it takes a woman who serves in, is responsible for, is complicit in – you pick the words – in the deaths of at least 300 Jews, and her big secret shame is that she's illiterate," Mark Weitzman, head of New York's Simon Wiesenthal Center, told the New York Post.

Sean Penn, the son of Jewish director Leo Penn, whose own parents arrived as immigrants from Lithuania and Russia, won the Oscar as best actor portraying a gay Jewish politician in Milk.

Veteran comedian Jerry Lewis received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award, recognizing his philanthropic efforts to aid muscular dystrophy victims.

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Award-winning designer is also a prominent artist

By LAURA STRICKER
Special to The CJN

If you've ever eaten in the food court at Toronto's Pearson International Airport, chances are you have seen the work of Martin Hirschberg.

Through his design firm Hirschberg Design Group, Hirschberg and his team of nine interior designers redesigned the Terminal 3 food court in Pearson Airport.

They are also responsible for the interiors of Piazza Manna and Pumpernickels in downtown Toronto. The Pickle Barrel and Superior and Fran's restaurants make up some of Hirschberg's Toronto-based projects as well.

One of Hirschberg's more challenging projects was to redefine what people think of off-track betting. This he accomplished with the design of downtown Toronto's Turf Lounge, an upscale bar, restaurant and off-track betting lounge for the business crowd.

Hirschberg's passion for design is unmistakable, from the attention to detail in each of his projects and how no two designs are the same.

"There's an excitement every day here. If there wasn't an excitement, I wouldn't be here," said Hirschberg, an interior designer for the hospitality industry for more than 35 years.

Early in his career, Hirschberg worked for a fixture company that specialized in restaurants. When he began working there, not much importance was placed on design. That changed, though, and Hirschberg was eventually made head of the company's design department. He founded the Hirschberg Design Group in the early 1970s.

Lingering Days from the Santorini series.

However, Hirschberg is renowned not only for his award-winning design firm but also for his art. His work has been in shows at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Stratford Art Gallery and the Blue Dot Gallery in the Distillery District in Toronto. Hirschberg also designed the Illuminated Glass Ark Doors at the Temple Sinai in Toronto.

Hirschberg's interior design career grew out of his first love, art. When he was a teenager, his grandfather paid for art lessons for him – something Hirschberg and his wife, Marion, now do for their grandchildren.

Hirschberg's series of paintings include some from the Greek island of Santorini and Provence, in France.

"I saw in Santorini this brightness, this life," he said. "None of the scenes in Santorini have people – it's all architecture."

Another series of his paintings is titled The Family – a departure from his usual painting of landscapes – in which he reflects on the dysfunctional nature of families.

Family comes first, before work, for the Hirschbergs.

"The most important thing in our lives, truthfully, is family," Marion Hirschberg, an actress, said. "The greatest pleasure is Friday night sitting around [the] table."

Another important part of their lives is Judaism, and the honouring of tradition that comes with it.

"When I light the Shabbat candles with my children and grandchildren on Friday night, that's probably one of the most important things in my life, because I am instilling in them a tradition. No matter where they go they'll remember those Fridays and they'll remember how we did it together," she said.

"We're extremely proud to be Jewish, and that's what we instil in our children – how lucky they are that they are living in a country where they can say that," she added.

Hirschberg is exhibiting his Santorini series of paintings at the Toronto Art Expo at the Metro Convention Centre March 19 - 22

Martin Hirschberg's website addresses are www.martinhirschbergartist.com and www.hirschbergdesign.com.

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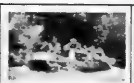

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

PRODUCERS RUBINOFF AND STEINBERG STAGE DOG SEES GOD, A HIT OFF-BROADWAY PLAY

Michael Rubinoff and **Lindsey Steinberg** present Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead, a hit off-Broadway play by **Bert V. Royal** that follows a well-known child comic-strip hero (his initials are C.B.) with a dog into his high-school years.

The play premièred in 2004 at the New York International Fringe Festival and has won several awards. The Toronto cast is headlined by Degrassi: The Next Generation favourite **Jake Epstein** as C.B. The Canadian première is at Toronto's Six Degrees, 2335 Yonge St., beginning March 13 for a four-week run. $26.50 to $51.50, includes drink ticket. Recommended for ages 14+. 1-888-222-6608, www.dogsees-god.ca

* * *

Inspirational Speaker: Sharon Hampson of the musical trio **Sharon, Lois & Bram**, who is a three-time breast cancer survivor, is the basis for one of the motivating stories in the anthology Living Legacies, A Collection of Inspirational Contemporary Canadian Jewish Women. She speaks this week about "Her Journey… with Detours, Adventures and Adversity."

Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave. (north of Lawrence, east of Bathurst) Suggested donation $10, includes refreshments. Thursday March 5, 7:30 p.m. 416-789-5502, www.winchevsky.org

* * *

Choir to Record Album: Toronto's **Renanim Youth Singers** are preparing to record an album of Jewish prayers and songs in the Jewish annual cycle for an interactive multimedia DVD-ROM to be distributed to students around the world. Founded 10 years ago, Renanim is a non-profit, Jewish community youth choir that "represents the full spectrum of Judaic pluralism," according to its artistic director, **Susan Michaels**. "A core mandate of Renanim is to foster a love for the richness and beauty of our collective Jewish heritage through music, regardless of one's Jewish affiliation, level of religious observance, or schooling," said Michaels, the daughter of observant Holocaust survivors and sister of Hollywood producer-director **Ivan Reitman**.

Koltor Publishing of Richmond Hill is producing the DVD-ROM in stages over the next three years. Students in grades 6 to 12 may audition to join the choir. www. renanim choirs.com

* * *

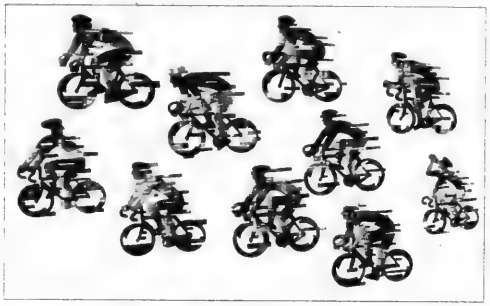
Names in the News: For the second time in two years, **Rafi Aaron**'s play Mandelshtam has won third prize in the Toronto Fringe Festival's new-play competition. The play tells the story of Stalin's persecution of Russian poet **Osip Mandelshtam**, who died in a transit camp near Vladivostok in 1938 at the age of 47.

The revised play is based on Aaron's book of prose poetry, Surviving the Censor – The Unspoken Words of Osip Mandelshtam (Seraphim Editions), which won the 2007 poetry prize at the Jewish Book Awards. However, the play is a completely new piece of art. "What excites me about this medium is it has allowed me to delve deeper into the human story beneath the historical narrative," Aaron said.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Toronto Jewish Film Society presents Contemporary Israeli Voices, a screening of three short films – namely, The Red Toy, The 74th, and Out For Love, Be Back Shortly. The featured speaker is **Shlomo Schwartzberg**. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. Sunday, March 15. Two screenings, 4 and 7:30 p.m. $15, $10. Rush tickets available 15 minutes before each screening.



"Bikers" by Israeli artist David Gerstein.

• **I. B. Iskov** has collected and edited a 46-page collection of autobiographical stories from members of the local Zaglembier Society. To receive a copy of Set in Stone: Holocaust Memoirs by Members of the Zaglembier Society, Toronto Chapter, send a $10 cheque to the Zaglembier Society, c/o I. B. Iskov, 31 Marisa Crt., Thornhill L4J 6H9.

• Kultur, a New Jersey-based film producer, is releasing The Jews – A People's History, a two-part documentary that explores 4,000 years of Jewish history. Its purpose "is to give the public deeper insight, beyond the Holocaust and Israeli politics, of the Jewish people," said director **Nina Koshofer**. The company is also releasing We Want the Light, in which great Jewish musicians describe the triumph of cultural expression over oppression in Nazi Germany. www.kultur.com

* * *

At the Galleries

• AM Studio and the Association for the Soldiers of Israel are hosting a group art exhibition in support of the Israeli soldiers. Artists include **Dalia Raphael**, **Ayal Raiter**, **Valery Rotenberg**, **Nava Waxman**, **Myriam F. Levy**, **Melanie Chikofsky**, **Shimon Peleg**, **Martin Or**, **Yigael Meyer** and Israeli artist **David Gerstein**. Sunday, March 8, 4 to 10 p.m. AM Studio, 4 Miranda Ave. (Dufferin-Castlefield area). 416-783-4100, www.amstudio.ca

• This summer, the Art Gallery of Ontario presents Surreal Things, an exhibition that examines the influence of surrealism on the world of design as expressed in theatre, interiors, fashion, film, architecture and advertising. Organized by London's Victoria and Albert Museum, the exhibit is to feature more than 200 items from artists **Salvador Dalí**, **Giorgio de Chirico**, **Marcel Duchamp**, **Max Ernst**, **René Magritte**, **Joan Miró**, **Meret Oppenheim**, **Man Ray** and others. At the AGO May 9 to Aug. 30.

Cantorial concert correction

The story "Cantorial concert to aid children with medical problems" (CJN, Feb. 26) incorrectly named one of the local cantors. It was Cantor Shlomo Sufrin who was to perform with the others mentioned, not Cantor Jodi Sufrin. We apologize for the error.

However, Chai Lifeline Canada has since informed The CJN that only featured Cantor Yizchak Meir Helfgot and local Cantor Benjamin Maissner will be performing.

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Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts opens

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

The new arts facility north of Toronto opened its doors on Feb. 28

The Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts celebrated its grand opening Feb. 28 with a concert headlined by award-winning Canadian stage actress and star of Broadway's Mamma Mia, Louise Pitre.

The facility, situated on 1.5 acres of land in Richmond Hill's downtown core at Yonge and Wright streets, includes a 631-seat main auditorium – the largest theatre-seating capacity in York Region. The centre also includes a rehearsal hall seating 150, lobby art galleries and an outdoor piazza for large-scale art exhibits and open-air presentations and productions.

"The building was built on the premise that it would serve the multicultural makeup of Richmond Hill and York Region," says Eli Lukawitz, the centre's marketing and development co-ordinator.

"It is an extremely diverse community. The Jewish population of Richmond Hill makes up about seven per cent, then when you look to our neighbour Thornhill, the Jewish demographic is huge," Lukawitz, 37, a longtime resident of York Region, said.

Audiences at the opening witnessed the debut performance of the Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra. Community groups, including the more than 100 voice Bayview Secondary School Choir, were also represented. Local thespians presented ensemble performances as well.

Lukawitz says that the artists he plans to book will reflect the cultures of the community.

"I think the Jewish community will play an extremely large role on how we see Richmond Hill going forward," he says. "In terms of patronage, I see the Jewish community, which has always embraced the arts, embracing this building. That is why we have been sensitive to make Jewish programming a valid piece of our puzzle."

On March 31, Toronto jazz singer Sophie Milman, who was born in Russia and raised in Israel, will perform. The first programming at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts was to have been Holocaust Education Week events last year, but they were cancelled due to the centre's construction delays. Lukawitz says he hopes the centre will be involved with Holocaust Education Week in some way this year.

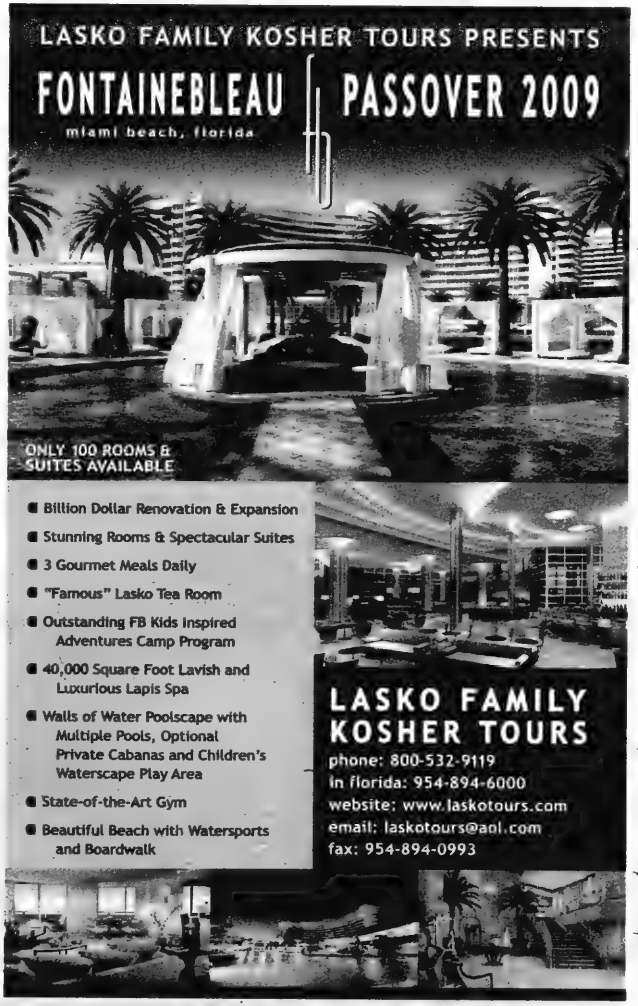
Upcoming performers at the centre include Chantal Kreviazuk, Arlo Guthrie and Blue Rodeo's Jim Cuddy.

There are also preliminary talks going on with the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company, with an eye to staging future theatrical presentations, Lukawitz says. He also hopes to bring in internationally known Jewish singers, musicians and comedians.

Lukawitz is the co-artistic director of the theatre company Tribal Productions, but the company is on hold while his new responsibilities at the centre take precedence.

He took the position at the centre because it is a way for him to lay down roots in the community and stay close to his young family, something the national touring schedule of Tribal Productions didn't allow for, Lukawitz says. He is married to actress Lisa Messinger and has two children, Jason, 4 and Jamie, 2.

For more information about upcoming performances at Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, visit www.richmondhill.ca.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Profiles of people who discover their Jewish roots

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

When Madeleine Albright was appointed U.S. secretary of state in 1997, the Washington Post disclosed that her Czech-born parents had been Jewish. Albright, who had been raised as a Christian, professed to be surprised by the news.

Barbara Kessel

Whether she was sincerely surprised is debatable, but the disclosure intrigued Barbara Kessel, a New York writer.

"This phenomenon of uncovering hidden roots fascinated me, and I was determined to do some research," she writes.

Kessel placed an authors' query in the New York Times Book Review and a posting on the Internet seeking non-Jews who had discovered they were of Jewish origin.

Of the 178 individuals who came forward, Kessel interviewed 166 in person or by telephone or mail.

The result is Suddenly Jewish: Jews Raised as Gentiles Discover Their Jewish Roots (University Press of New England).

The book profiles the descendants of Spanish and Portuguese Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity in the 15th century, Jewish children who were placed in non-Jewish homes during the Holocaust, children of Holocaust survivors who denied their Jewish heritage, and Jews adopted by Christian parents.

Kessel's modus operandi is to introduce the theme and let her subjects speak their mind.

Her chapter on Crypto-Jews is particularly instructive.

During the Inquisition period, Jews in Spain and Portugal could convert to Roman Catholicism, leave the Iberian Peninsula or die at the stake. A small proportion of Jews, unhappy with any of the above, lived openly as Christians but inwardly as Jews. Known also as New Christians, some of them settled in Latin America and later, in the southeastern United States.

Eventually, the vast majority of Crypto-Jews and their descendants were completely assimilated by Christian society. A few, however, never lost touch with their Jewish roots, and these are the people Kessel interviewed.

Maria, a Catholic to her priest and a Jew to her rabbi, talked about her grandmother, who kept separate pots and silverware for different kinds of food, and lit candles on Friday night.

Miriam told Kessel that her grandfather never ate pork and prayed in a foreign language, which, it turned out, was Hebrew.

Rogelio said that many members of his family had Jewish-sounding first names – Abraham, Zacarias and Elias –and that "all our men are circumcised."

Kessel, in her discussion on hidden Jewish children, writes that they were traumatized twice – first when they were removed from their parents, and again when they were reunited after World War II. As she puts it, "Not only were they transferred from home to home, but when they rejoined their Jewish parents, they had to leave the church, which some of them had learned to love."

Abraham Foxman, the director of the Anti-Defamation League, was one such child. "My Jewishness I had no choice about," said Foxman, who was born in Poland. "Had my parents not survived, I would have stayed Christian. I was five when they came back for me. There was a fierce custody trial, and if I had been older, my caretaker would have won…"

Foxman is convinced that there are thousands of children who do not even know their parents were Jewish.

Yossi, a Jew from Holland who lives in Israel today, told Kessel his mother was so determined not to be targeted again as a Jew that she cut all her ties with the past.

"Having come from a practising [Jewish] family, this was a traumatic break with Judaism, but she had lost her faith and suffered tremendous anxiety about anti-Semitism," Yossi said.

Yossi's mother, having married a Christian, swore her husband to secrecy about her Jewish background. But when the Six Day War broke out, Yossi heard her wailing. "Oh, no, not again." She feared that Israel would lose and that its Jewish citizens would be killed.

Yossi did not make the connection immediately, but as time passed, he became increasingly interested in Israel and wanted to be part of the Jewish people. In 1974, he made aliyah.

Rose, raised as a Catholic in Poland, discovered that her Jewish mother persuaded her father to join her in converting to Christianity.

"She was afraid to be Jewish," Rose explained. "My father figured, God is God, so he went along with it. They sent me to a Catholic school and we all went to church together. But they must have had mixed feelings, because when my younger brother was five, they had him circumcised."

Rose and her family immigrated to the United States in 1959, maintaining their Catholic identity. Fulfilling a promise, her father sent Rose on a trip to meet her relatives abroad.

Rose spent a year overseas, including three months in Israel.

"At first, the idea of being Jewish didn't mean anything to me because I didn't know anything about it," she said. "Later, as I read Holocaust novels like Exodus and Mila 18, it became more and more meaningful."

Carol, born in Boston, is the daughter of a German Jewish woman who converted to Christianity before marrying her Lutheran husband in Germany.

When life under the Nazis became untenable, Carol and her family settled in the United States, where she was baptized. Yet, after her father's death, Carol's mother decided to move to Palestine, where her two sisters lived.

Recalling her days in Palestine, Carol said, "I remember going to my aunt's kibbutz wearing my crucifix. When my uncle saw it, he ripped it off my neck and replaced it with the Star of David without any explanation. That was a traumatic moment for me. Nobody told me what was going on."

Carol and her mother moved back to the United States in 1947, shortly after Arab-Jewish riots broke out. They returned to Israel in the wake of the 1948 war. In Israel, Carol embraced Judaism. "I absolutely identify now as a Jew," she said.

In the final chapter, Kessel shines a spotlight on Shelley, who was adopted by a Mormon family but never really fit in because of her olive complexion and dark hair and dark eyes. Ultimately, Shelley found her Jewish relatives, studied in Israel and converted to Judaism.

Shelley's story and that of all the others in Suddenly Jewish is emblematic of a larger reality – the allure of Jewishness despite the greatest odds.

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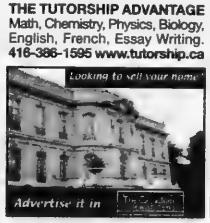

Coast to Coast

National CUPE union distances itself from Ontario affiliate

Continued from page 1

so that's what our new group is about – building on our past efforts, our past successes, and building a larger organization and a bigger network to respond to what were seeing now."

The core group currently has about a dozen people, he said.

CUPE National president Paul Moist issued a statement Feb. 24, distancing the national body from the resolution adopted by its provincial affiliate.

In the statement, Moist said, "CUPE is made up of autonomous provincial divisions and local unions, each of which has the right to adopt policies independent of one another, and independent of the national union… The views expressed in the resolution are those of a small number of CUPE Ontario members. The resolution does not represent CUPE national policy."

Calls by The CJN to Moist were not returned by deadline.

Singer said, however, that "since members of the public don't necessarily understand the distinction between CUPE Ontario and CUPE national and the different CUPE locals, [the Ontario resolutions have] an effect on all of us. We all get painted with that same brush in the eyes of the public."

He said his group will also approach other unions, such as the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and various locals to try to form a broad coalition against future anti-Israel resolutions and practices that create "divisions in membership" and in Canadian society at large.

Singer said he wants Ryan to know that he and others are "proud to be union members but also proud to support Israel. I think there is a tendency of many Jewish union members to be embarrassed about their belonging to the union, and that has intensified since Resolution 50 was adopted."

He encouraged people to visit www.unionmembersforIsrael.ca and join the mailing list.

Depending on level of interest, UMI will consider holding meetings to discuss strategy and plan events.

"There is strength in numbers, and I would love to build a strong network that could be a foundation for planning all sorts of activities and events going forward."

Others are taking up the anti-Ryan torch.

Last week, some 40 academic members of CUPE Ontario Local 3902 – representing nearly 6,000 sessional teachers, teaching assistants and other contract instructional staff at the University of Toronto – signed an open letter to Ryan expressing "outrage" at his union's actions, questioning his leadership and calling for Ryan's resignation as president for his role in "undermining our union."

Paul Egan Nahme, a PhD student and teaching assistant at the university's Centre for Jewish Studies and the originator of the letter, told The CJN last week he hoped it would let the Jewish community know that there are those in unions on campus who will stand up for Israel.

Nahme, who is also a member of UMI, wrote the open letter questioning why CUPE Ontario's leaders are doing anything "even remotely anti-Semitic" and describing Ryan's presidential tactics as more "authoritarian" than democratic.

The union's passage of a motion to boycott Israeli academic institutions calls into question the principles of "academic freedom" and, just as importantly, Nahme's letter says, raises concerns about CUPE Ontario's "expression of an autocratic minority that has disregarded the tenets of the democratic socialist tradition – namely, the freedom of discussion, critique, votes involving all members and transparency."

Paul Moist

It closes with the following statement:

"We do not consent to have our wages used to support resolutions on which we have not been allowed to vote, which violate the spirit of the union's constitution, and which compromise our integrity at a most fundamental level."

(For the full text of the letter visit The CJN's website www.cjnews.com).

Nahme said he circulated the letter to some of the major national newspaper outlets last week, but as of the weekend had not heard back from them.

"Most of the signatories on the letter are not Jewish," he said. "They're just people who are frustrated and… in a wider sense, intimidated by resolutions that can spark anti-Semitism. These are not union politics."

Nahme said he also wanted the letter to reflect the idea that Ryan is seemingly more concerned about Middle East politics and his own "dislike of Israel" than he is about improving the contracts and treatment of his organization's members.

"I don't see how meddling in international politics has anything to do with [union operations]," he added.

Local 3902 did not support CUPE Ontario's Resolution 50 and has also decided "not to endorse a call for a boycott of Israeli academics," according to its website.

Still, Nahme said he believes there is a possibility that he and others who worked on and signed his letter could have their union memberships revoked.

"Despite the fact that my local has distanced itself from CUPE Ontario on this motion… I think Local 3902 is still politically volatile," he said. "But if I challenge [the local], I risk being blackballed."

Nahme said, however, that his worries in this regard are tempered by the fact that CUPE national has distanced itself from the CUPE Ontario motion to boycott Israeli academic institutions.

"It's clearly not an essential resolution for a labour movement or union politics in Canada," he said.

The federal Conservative government, the Liberal opposition and Jewish groups were all unanimous in denouncing the motion last week and encouraging Moist to take an even stronger stance against CUPE Ontario and Ryan.

In a statement, Mark Goldberg, vice-chair of Canadian Jewish Congress' Ontario region, said the resolution "represents another low point in the proud history of the Canadian labour movement's involvement in international affairs."

Frank Dimant, B'nai Brith Canada's executive vice-president, called on Moist to ensure that CUPE national continues to condemn "the vehemently anti-Israel agenda for which its Ontario affiliate has become notorious."

Last Monday, Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney told Canadian Press that the CUPE Ontario motion was full of "unbalanced rhetoric about Israel as a… racist state" and that CUPE Ontario was proving itself "intolerant" of Israel.

Dominic Leblanc, Liberal justice critic, called the CUPE motion "reprehensible" and "discriminatory."

"This goes beyond reasonable criticism," he said in a statement. "We're seeing Israeli Jews demonized in a way that has absolutely no place in our public discourse."

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Israel, Sweden to play Davis Cup match sans fans

JTA

STOCKHOLM — Israel and Sweden will play their Davis Cup match without spectators.

Swedish organizers last week cited security concerns for the empty-arena policy when the national tennis squads compete March 6 to 8 in the southern city of Malmo, cbssports.com reported. Anti-Israeli demonstrations spurred by Israel's recent military operation in Gaza are expected during the best-of-five series.

Stockholm, saying it could better guarantee security, had offered to host the match, but officials in the capital realized later they didn't have enough time to organize before the Israelis arrived Feb. 28.

Stockholm officials claimed that Malmo's decision was political. Malmo, Sweden's third-largest city, has a left-leaning government and a large Muslim minority. Its leaders strongly criticized Israel after the Gaza invasion, and some called for dropping the Davis Cup match.

Shahar Pe'er

Stockholm has a centre-right majority that is more pro-Israeli.

Malmo Mayor Ilmar Reepalu insisted the decision to bar spectators was solely based on security concerns. He noted that pro-Palestinian groups disrupted a recent pro-Israel demonstration by throwing bottles, eggs and fireworks.

The decision comes after an Israeli tennis player, Shahar Pe'er, was denied a visa last month by the United Arab Emirates to compete in a Dubai tournament. Another Israeli, Andy Ram, was given a visa to play in the men's Dubai tournament Feb. 25 to March 9.

JTA

DUBAI — Israeli tennis star Andy Ram lost his opening doubles match in the Dubai tournament.

Ram, ranked 12th in the world in doubles play, received a special permit Feb. 19 to enter the United Arab Emirates to play in the Barclays Dubai Tennis Championships following international criticism over the country's decision not to allow Israeli Shahar Pe'er to play in the women's competition.

Andy Ram

Ram and partner Kevin Ullyett of Zimbabwe were beaten Feb. 25 by Russia's Marat Safin and Spain's David Ferrer. Security was tight for the match, including the use of metal detectors.

Earlier in the week, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert urged Ram to boycott the tournament.

"I was a bit surprised to discover that Andy Ram did intend to go there," Ha'aretz quoted Olmert as saying on Feb. 22. "It would be highly worthwhile for someone to advise him to demonstrate patriotism and solidarity and boycott the tournament."

The men's defending champion, American Andy Roddick, skipped the tournament over the failure to grant an entry visa to Pe'er.

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Israeli wins gold medal in judo

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WARSAW — Arik Ze'evi won a gold medal on Sunday in judo's World Cup second round, held in Warsaw.

Ze'evi, competing in the under-100-kilogram class, defeated Bulgarian Daniel Dichev on points in the first round. He then went on to win the next four rounds, including the final against German Robert Zimmerman, whom he defeated in an Ippon win. It was Ze'evi's last competition before the European Championship later this year.

Arik Ze'evi

Ze'evi is one of Israel's leading judokas and was one of the country's medal hopefuls entering the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics.

Though he failed to win a medal, at the time Ze'evi told Israeli media he didn't want to finish his career on a losing note, a strong indicator that he intended to make amends at last weekend's World Cup meet.

'It's not you, it's him'

Apparently, he's just not that into me. Or you, or her or anyone else for that matter if we are to believe this new so-called philosophy.

This catch phrase from a Sex and the City episode-turned-book-turned-movie is beginning to get on my nerves.

"It's not you, it's him," is something the girls and I say to one another regularly when we're complaining about the boys in our life. And it always seems to make so much sense at the time.

He didn't call after a great date? He's obviously dumb – it's not you, it's him. He wants to hang out with his friends? He's definitely still stuck in high school – it's not you, it's him. He doesn't want to get married? He's got commitment issues – it's not you, it's him.

We say that to one another because every woman deep in her heart is always afraid she's not enough. And now we've got a book/movie that just confirms that fear.

A girlfriend of mine said she found the movie inspiring, while I found it downright insulting.

If you haven't seen it yet and still plan to, you might want to skip the next few paragraphs but basically, in the movie the "wise-guy" tells a pathetic excuse for a girl that every guy she meets is "just not that into her" and that while there are exceptions to the rule, most likely, the girl is the rule and not the exception.

Of course, the movie-makers couldn't let every girl walk out of the theatre depressed and so obviously the girls in the movie end up being the exception to the rule.

This movie is supposed to be the guy-dictionary we've all been searching for all these years? Maybe I'm just clueless when it comes to love, but I walked out of there more confused than ever.

All I know is that when I'm not romantically interested in someone who I know is romantically interested in me, I don't send out mixed signals.

I don't call them, kiss them or ask them to hang out. I don't reach out when I'm down, reach out when I'm happy or reach out at all really. I'm always friendly, but I never give them a reason to ever question whether I'm into them or not.

I'm not a complicated girl and I wear my heart on my sleeve. If I'm just not that into you, you're not gonna need a cheesy movie to figure it out.

But guys are different it seems. It doesn't take a genius to feel when love has gone cold, but what about when the guy in your life is constantly hot and cold? Not all guys mind you, but a lot of guys love the game, love feeling wanted, love being chased. They are the masters of mixed signals.

If they're just not that into us, then why won't they just leave us alone?

It's easy to make sweeping generalizations – boys are bad to the bone and girls are made of sugar and spice and everything nice. But I know that's a load of bull.

There are girls out there who love the attention and never really let any guy get too far before reeling them in again, without a second thought about if she's into them or not.

I'm just not that into that.

But what I and a lot of other girls are into unfortunately are the guys who keep us guessing. The players who are as charming as they are emotionally distant. The womanizers who know just what to say but don't ever say what you want. The men who we can never quite figure out.

And in that case, it's true girls. The problem is not them. It's us.

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SALAD:
12 c salad greens of your choice
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3/4 c granulated sugar
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1 Tbsp. salt
1 1/2 c vegetable oil

Blend dressing ingredients. Refrigerate at least 1 hour. Cook and stir almonds and sugar in skillet over low heat until sugar is melted and nuts are coated. Cool on wax paper. Break apart. Set aside. Toss dressing with salad greens and arrange on plates. Top with orange sections, onion slices and sugared almonds.

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It seems that all we do now is fight. Money is tight, Paul and I are both worried, and our nerves are raw. I find that even our daughter is crying and is crankier than ever. I guess she feels the vibes in the house.

I am hoping we will get through this with our marriage intact, but as each day goes by, we seem to be growing further apart, as the pressure is chipping away at us, and inappropriate comments are being made that can't be taken back. Somehow the love we share seems to be taking a back seat to the stress we share. We need a strategy to get us through these tough times.

Marriage Meltdown

About Life

Dear Marriage Meltdown

This recession affects every part of our lives. Every time you turn on a radio or TV, all you hear is doom and gloom. Your family has become a victim of this recession, but it's not too late to climb back up to a safe place to weather this storm.

The most important way to manage this stage in your marriage is communication – not accusatory discussions, but constructive ones. You've now had some time to get over the shock of Paul's layoff, and you are both running the gamut of emotions. You need to regroup both emotionally and financially. You need a plan.

Sit down together and make a budget. Seeing numbers on paper not only makes it easier to plan, but once you see how much you need and how much you have, it's easier to find areas where you can trim. There's no question this will require a lifestyle adjustment, but in the grand scheme of things, this is a blip, albeit a big blip, in a lifelong marriage. Don't forget to make time to enjoy yourselves, too – a family outing, a walk in the park, ice skating, tobogganing, playing games. You need the fun stuff to balance out life.

Work together and support each other though this. It won't last forever. Just hunker down and ride it out together. You have a strong common goal: your family. Working together through this crisis will empower and strengthen your marriage. You can do this.

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN, *email: eb@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.*

Kippah-Friday: proud to be a Jew!

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

A few weeks ago, I encouraged CJN readers to e-mail me to let me know if they were interested in being involved in a grassroots movement to fight anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiments. I received 10 responses.

Brothers and sisters, major Jewish organizations are slowly recognizing the need for an aggressive grassroots community mobilization strategy to defend ourselves and present our case in a very religious, yet paradoxically godless, time.

There is much to do, however, and everyone needs to be involved.

Now is the time to recognize that we need to let go of some of our material pursuits so as not to fall deeper into the comfort trap. We have a beautiful life in Canada, thank God, but some things are changing. It's time to step up.

How many of you were concerned with the following and tried to get involved in fighting these actions?

Israeli Apartheid Week, born in Toronto, and now co-ordinated in 40 cities around the world, is taking place at Ryerson University, the University of Toronto and York University as you read this. It's one week of virulent anti-Israel and anti-Semitic speeches, lectures and films "showing the true nature of Israeli Apartheid."

Sid Ryan, the president of CUPE Ontario, recently pushed through his union's resolution to boycott Israeli universities, an act called "shameful and fundamentally un-Canadian" by a local Jewish activist.

For years, you and I have ensconced ourselves in Holocaust education trying to answer questions such as, "How does hatred grow?" Remember how disturbing it was when you discovered how hushed the world was, including many of our own people? Remember when you swore you would fight if you were asked to become a Jewish soldier? Now you're being asked.

There are role models in our community, regular folk, who are responding to this call. One such person is Mel Korn, a Jewish businessman who authored a petition calling for Ryan's resignation. It garnered 13,000 signatures.

"I'm just your average middle-aged guy, trying to survive this economy, making sure my kids graduate into a good world," Mel said. "I am a Yid who found my voice."

Mel also called the office of the president of York University, after Jewish students were harassed on campus and a pro-Palestinian mob barricaded Hillel's lounge. (Yes, this happened in Toronto!) He told the president's liaison he would organize a grassroots campaign to discourage Jewish donors from making pledges unless action was taken. He let them know about his anti-CUPE petition.

"They were quite conscientious about answering my concerns," Mel said. "We as Jews have to say, 'I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore.'"

I urge you to approach your rabbi and major community organizations and request the creation of a committee whose sole mission is to determine ways of getting every congregant and member involved in this Jewish battle.

I ask you to approach our Jewish campus organizations and offer your services and presence during events where anti-Semitic crowds might be present.

I ask you to befriend decent people of all backgrounds so that they can recognize the true nature of Israel and the Jewish people – one of goodness and Shalom.

I call on you to show Jewish pride by wearing a kippah and/or a visible Magen David every Friday in March, even if this is not your tradition.

To be Jewish is to fight for justice. Fight, then, because you are a Jew.

E-mail me through my blog, avrum.net This grassroots movement is gaining momentum.

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LIVE & LEARN

The Canadian Jewish news

Section B

THE RENANIM YOUTH SINGERS embark on a 10th anniversary project.

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SCHOOL LIBRARIES take on new roles.

Page B8

DANI offers programs for young adults with special needs.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYER is addressed at Jewish schools.

Page B19

ARTIST AND SELF PORTRAIT: Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School senior kindergarten student Noa Granovsky Sand presents her self-portrait, created collaboratively with her classmates.

Living & Learning

Editorial

At The CJN, we tend to refer to the section of the paper you're reading as the education supplement. Its title, however – "Live & Learn" – may be a better reflection of its content.

Academic learning is enriched by a real-life component, just as life is often enhanced when lessons, not necessarily academic ones, are learned through experience.

In the supplement, which appears annually in our Purim issue, we meet the first deaf Jewish student to attend Yeshivat Or Chaim and feature a story on the ways in which teachers at pluralistic schools address and validate their students' individual takes on Jewish theology. Both stories contain implicit lessons on life in an increasingly diverse world.

An article about security at Jewish schools speaks to concerns related to the recent conflict in Gaza, while another piece looks at how Jewish schools make prayer meaningful for students.

Replacing praise with description, and how doing so benefits young children, was a concept I was unfamiliar with until I interviewed Vancouver preschool educator Debbie Lewin. Although she spoke to the paper in her professional capacity, she and I have a personal connection that goes back some 50 years.

We actually attended nursery school together in 1960, the year we turned four.

Next week the Jewish community celebrates Purim. Enjoy the colourful artwork in our centre spread, featuring the winning submissions from our annual Purim art contest, and Chag Samayach!

– F.K.

READING, WRITING AND WORKSHOPS: Carmel Hadar, above, a Grade 1 student at the Toronto Heschel School, took part in a writers' workshop, where she learned to plan, draft, revise, edit and publish narrative and non-narrative texts.

LIVE MUSIC: TanenbaumCHAT's Symphonic Band plays at a TanenbaumCHAT Kimel Cougars basketball game.

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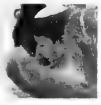
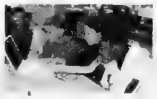


Warm and embracing faculty share their love of Judaism & Israel



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Pluralistic schools respect students' diverse views

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

One of the top priorities of Jewish school educators is to make sure that all students – regardless of their denomination or belief in God – have a strong Jewish identity, said Debbie Cohen Savage, Judaic studies co-ordinator at the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School.

Cohen Savage, a modern Orthodox Jew who teaches Grade 6 at the pluralistic day school, said she and her colleagues teach students from senior kindergarten to Grade 8, some of whom are very strong believers in God, while others may not believe in God at all.

"My role… is to help teachers teach in a pluralistic way so that no student feels like they are not validated," she said.

"We are a God-believing school and we make that very clear, but what your concept of God is could be extremely different. They all need to be embraced as something that is valid."

She said the staff comprises both Orthodox and secular teachers who recognize that there is more than one way of being Jewish.

"No matter what your belief is, kids need to leave feeling proud of who they are and have a strong Jewish identity. That is the core of our teaching."

An example of the way Paul Penna teachers encourage diverse theological views is the way they expose students to prayer through a variety of lenses.

"They might try with their kids a few different kinds of *Shema* and ask the kids, 'Which one are you comfortable with?'" Cohen Savage said.

"The point of exercises like that is that the kids see that there is not one way of practising or reciting the *Shema*. You can do it with your eyes open, you can do it in English, you can stand, you can sit, you can drum it, you can move to it."

Each week, the students also participate in a discussion called "Awe-talk," during which teachers and students have the opportunity to delve into the prayers in an English discussion. But, Cohen Savage added, it doesn't always have to be about God and prayer.

"Some of the kids in my class went to a shiva, so we got into an amazing discussion about how Judaism approaches death and mourning and all the different rituals around a shiva. It is really a chance to have a spirituality-infused discussion within the classroom as opposed to just your traditional prayer service," she said.

Despite the emphasis on spirituality, Cohen Savage said there are many instances when students approach teachers about their struggle with a belief in God.

"If a student says, 'I don't believe in God and my parents don't believe in God,' what we've trained teachers to do – and it is difficult, especially if it goes against your own beliefs – is to say, 'That's OK. If you don't want to say the *Shema* to God, then why is it still important to say the *Shema*?… Why is it still important to pray?' They still see that a big part of Judaism is prayer and it doesn't necessarily have to be attributed to God."

Debbie Cohen Savage

She said that children naturally challenge everything and she encourages her students to question.

"Even adults are constantly struggling and it's OK to not know what exactly you believe yet, but to realize that there is still a place for prayer, there is still a place to be spiritual."

She said that one of the biggest challenges for the teachers is to break the habit of referring to God as a masculine being.

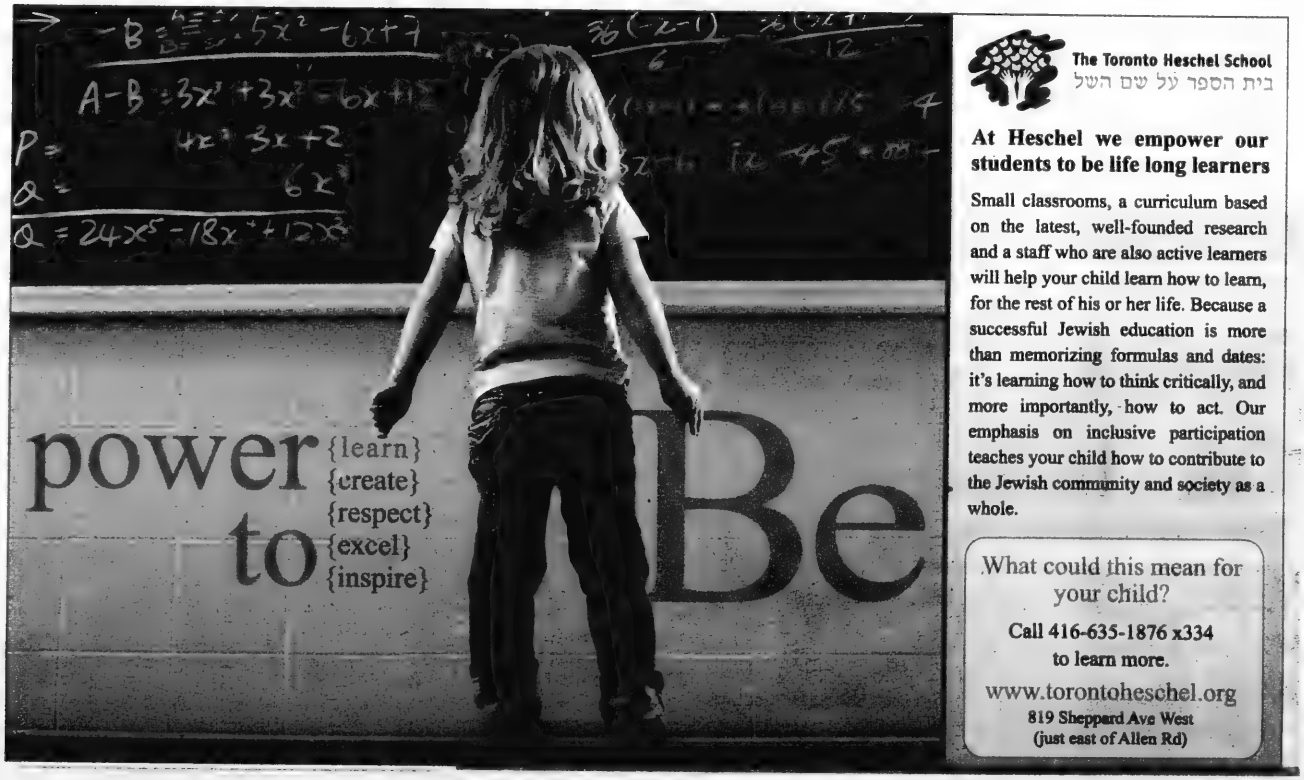
"They have to practice whenever they say God's name, to say God, say Hashem and not use the Lord, which is masculine, not use He," Cohen Savage said.

"What happens when you do that, is that especially for little kids, when you keep saying He, they develop a very concrete kind of image in their head, and because they are such creative thinkers at such a young age, we want them to come up with their own image."

The purpose of her school's pluralistic approach, Cohen Savage said, is to create "literate Jews" who can feel comfortable in any Jewish atmosphere.

"They can leave our school and walk into any synagogue, whether it is in Toronto or another country, and be able to adapt to what they're doing."

Continued on page B4



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'A spirit of constructive discussion'

Continued from page B3

Paul Shaviv, director of education at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, which serves students from grades 9 to 12, said that students who have differing beliefs in God is something that the teachers at TanenbaumCHAT are encouraged to deal with.

"CHAT is a pluralistic school. We are very proud that our faculty and our student body embrace a very wide diversity of views. We consider that to be a feature of our school."

He said the school's student body is about 13 per cent Orthodox, about 50 to 60 per cent Conservative and about 15 per cent Reform, plus there are other students who may not identify with those three denominations.

He said that although it has happened that students have clashed with their teachers over their differing beliefs, "we try to engender a spirit of constructive discussion in and outside our classroom, and if and when people disagree, I would hope that they are always able to disagree in a civilized manner."

Paul Shaviv

In a speech Shaviv gave at a TanenbaumCHAT staff retreat in 2005, he said, "There are occasional points where this delicate balance tips. They are regrettable, but realistically they are inevitable and not particularly common – in fact, they are surprisingly rare."

He said that teachers are welcome to give their own views in the classroom, as long as they identify them as such, and as long as they open their classrooms to a diversity of views and opinions.

"Ninety five per cent of the time, that works very well. We are not a dogmatic school. I think that is a large part of our success," Shaviv said.

School distinguishes between serious and non-serious Jews

"The only distinction we recognize among our students is between serious Jews and non-serious Jews. This school is in the business of educating serious Jews."

Shaviv said he defines a serious Jew as someone who "engages with their Jewishness in whichever dimension that takes, but it has to be a serious engagement based on knowledge, reflection and genuine curiosity…

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Live & Learn

Describe, don't praise, preschool educator advises

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

In a society that reinforces praise as a route to a positive self-concept, most adults have a hard time accepting the idea that praising children is not always in their best interests, according to a Vancouver preschool educator.

Debbie Lewin, assistant director of the Vancouver Jewish Community Centre's early childhood education (ECE) department and its head of Judaic programming, said in a telephone interview, "When you say, 'Don't praise,' people feel that something is going to be missing."

Lewin, who has led workshops for both parents and ECE educators on subjects including positive language and praise, believes in using descriptive words instead, "to help children recognize what they accomplished."

Don't use "judgment words" like "good" or "bad," Lewin advises.

An alternative might be to say, "Look at that – you came down the slide all by yourself!" she suggested.

"It's about learning a new language. What are you doing when you say, 'Look at that?' You're asking the child to reflect."

Facial expression, tone of voice and body language can indicate that you are impressed, she added.

"You're noticing what they've done. You're acknowledging them, but you're also bringing it back to them... Their natural reaction should be, 'I did it!'"

As well, she said, if you describe what you see, it can open a conversation with the child.

Debbie Lewin

Lewin, a Toronto native who has been teaching in Vancouver for 23 years, said, "If you're always looking for praise from someone in order for you to judge who you are, you're not building your own sense of self. You're depending on someone else to tell you. But if you help children just reflect on what they've done, they're going to feel good about it for its own sake, and good about themselves because they're learning to acknowledge themselves."

Lewin first learned to question her tendency to praise from the preschool's past director, Roslyn Kushner Belle, who retired recently. "If she were to hear me say something such as 'I like the way you did....,'" she would comment, 'Why does it matter that you like it? It's much more effective to describe what you see.'"

As well, Lewin said, the work of Boston-based education and parenting author Alfie Kohn helped her understand the new approach.

She admits that, at first, she also struggled with the concept of not praising. "What kept coming to my mind when we tried to change our language was that I needed praise [as a youngster]. I needed my parents' approval."

But she came to the conclusion that it wasn't her parents' approval she needed, but more their acknowledgment.

"When you have very young children, they're totally dependent on their parents, so they do everything to please them. It's all about bonding.

"As you're growing into your own, it's probably good to want to be kind and do good things to please your family, but it should be more about doing something because it's the right thing to do."

Other approaches adults might substitute for praise include asking children to describe what they are doing – for example, their artwork – or even not reacting at all. "If they're really absorbed in something, interrupting it wouldn't be right."

Lewin, who has long been fascinated by children's sense of wonder and appreciation for life, said she wouldn't go so far as to tell parents never to praise children. "If it feels natural, and you're excited and you're proud, it's fine."

But she added a caveat. "This is where it gets tricky," she said. "People take that little bit of permission and they might keep praising. It's almost better to learn the new language of not praising, but rather acknowledging, and then when something happens and you just feel so proud, and you want to let the child know that, there may be a place for that."

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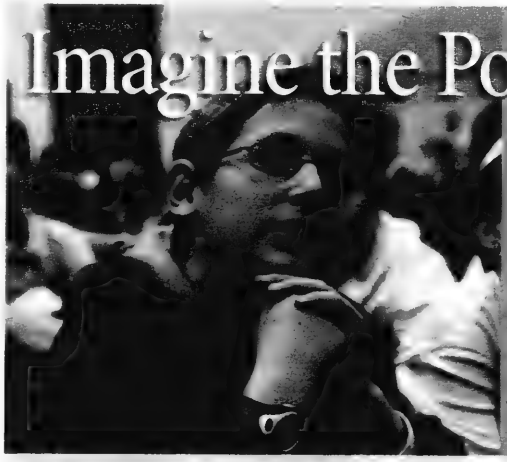

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Youth choir to record songs associated with holidays, prayers

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

As part of Renanim Youth Singers 10th anniversary celebrations, they are embarking on a new project.

The Jewish community youth choir, directed by Susan Michaels, has been invited by Koltor Publishing, a company committed to Jewish interactive learning, to record the tfillot and songs associated with the yearly cycle of Jewish holidays and prayers.

The recordings will be incorporated in an interactive multimedia DVD-ROM, which will be distributed to students in congregational and day schools worldwide.

The project was developed in collaboration with rabbis, cantors, educators and lay leaders from the Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist movements.

Tzvi Taub, director of Koltor Publishing, said in a press release that he did not have to think hard about where to enlist help for the project.

"Choosing the Renanim Youth Singers to record this important collection of musical prayer was easy for me. The choir's spirited and soulful sound is inspirational, making it the perfect choice," he wrote.

The Renanim Youth Singers, above, include students from elementary school to Grade 12. Director Susan Michaels is in the back row, second from left.

Michaels, who is "humbled and grateful" for the recognition, said that it will be a multi-year undertaking for the choir. They will record the materials for grades 1 and 2 in 2009, grades 3 and 4 in 2010 and grades 5 to 7 in 2011.

"This is a natural for us. A core mandate of Renanim is to foster a love for the richness and beauty of our collective Jewish heritage through music, regardless of one's Jewish affiliation, level of religious observance or schooling," she said.

"Jewish music is the connective channel between emotional and intellectual communication. It taps into the inner soul, the *neshamah*, and develops a positive sense of Jewish identity and culture for these kids."

Working with the choir has been a labour of love, Michaels said. "Regardless of how high I set the musical bar, they always meet the standard, and then together we aim even higher.

"I have been given the privilege and joy of harnessing their extraordinary talent and enthusiasm. The kids take their music very seriously and can be counted on to perform and behave professionally during community events," she added.

The choir, Michaels said, is made up of students from elementary school to Grade 12 and represents the entire community. "We have members from every day school in the city and from many public schools."

She said she is working the new project into the choir's current rehearsal and performance schedule – they rehearse once a week – which also includes a second singing tour through Israel.

Other 10th anniversary celebrations include the launch of the choir's second CD, Israel at 60 – Despair to Triumph, featuring songs about the horrors of the Holocaust and about Israel and its accomplishments.

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Live & Learn

Or Chaim's first deaf student graduates this year

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

For Joshua Soudakoff, the first and only deaf student at Yeshivat Or Chaim, everything does not revolve around his lack of hearing.

Speaking through an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter, the Los Angeles native said in an interview at the school that deaf students have goals and aspirations just like hearing students do.

He has applied to university and is considering a career in law after he completes his undergraduate studies.

Soudakoff – whose father and mother, a computer programmer and an accountant respectively, are also deaf, as are his younger brother and sister – came to Toronto three years ago to attend Yeshivas Nefesh Dovid: the International Yeshiva High School for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. The student population of the one-of-a-kind school includes North Americans, Israelis and Europeans.

Joshua Soudakoff

"I wanted to get a Jewish education that would be in sign language," said Soudakoff, whose first language was ASL. His mother, Sharon Ann, founded the Jewish Deaf Community Center (JDCC) in Los Angeles and runs Jewish holiday programs for the deaf community there.

Soudakoff takes his general studies courses at Or Chaim, where he is usually accompanied by an interpreter, although he has attended Shabbatonim without one.

The Grade 12 student has excelled in his studies, according to general studies principal Frank Samuels.

Samuels met with students and staff before Soudakoff started classes to ensure that there "would be buy-in" from everybody. "They were phenomenal," he recalled. "There was no hesitation."

The school also had a session for teachers on ASL, and some of the students have also learned enough sign language to communicate directly with Soudakoff.

Before moving to Toronto at age 15, Soudakoff attended a school for the deaf during the day and supplementary Hebrew school after hours, sometimes with an interpreter.

His enrolment at Or Chaim was motivated in part by his parents' desire for him to have exposure to the hearing world, he said.

"The first day, I was fairly nervous," he recalled. "I wasn't too sure how I was going to fit in."

"There's a lot of dependence on sound in Jewish life," Soudakoff noted. "Some people feel they need to hear to fit in."

In Los Angeles, he grew up attending Chabad services where there was no interpreter. "It was a small, comfortable environment, and the rabbi was very friendly."

Soudakoff lip-reads "a little bit," he said. "Really, I don't need an interpreter [in synagogue], because if I'm talking to God, it's between me and Him."

"I can usually look around and see the dynamic. You pick up on some of the subtleties." As well, he said, visual indicators such as the opening of the Aron Kodesh let him know what is going on.

During the school week, his interpreter is with him only when he is in class at Or Chaim. "I wish he could stay with me and do my laundry," Soudakoff quipped.

Or Chaim has been "very accommodating," Soudakoff said. He would advise other deaf students considering a similar move to work hard in school and make sure they have "a few good friends who can help you out" when necessary and let them know if they miss anything.

Outside of school, Soudakoff keeps in touch with his hearing friends by e-mail.

For hearing students, he would suggest trying to learn a little bit of sign language.

Although he is enthusiastic about his school experience and gave Toronto two thumbs up, Soudakoff was less excited about the winter weather here.

"I'm definitely not enjoying it, but I didn't come for the weather. I came for the academics… Whatever happened to global warming?"

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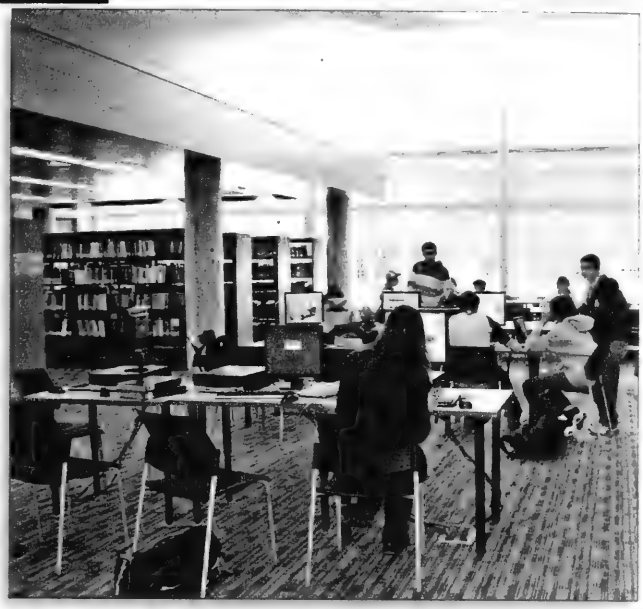
Live & Learn

School libraries have an expanded role

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

School libraries have changed with the times and today they are much more than a repository of books.

Donna Schechter, a half-time teacher-librarian at United Synagogue Day School's (USDS) Bayview campus, describes the school library as a "warm space" filled with students engaged in reading or other related activities.



A typical scene in the library at TanenbaumCHAT's Kimel campus

"We're open three recesses a day. Sometimes you can't find room. The students sprawl themselves on the floor."

The Ida and Aaron Urman Library and Resources Centre, a facility the day school shares with Beth Tikvah Synagogue, is always being updated. Last summer, there was a major overhaul, Schechter says.

She and teacher-librarian Norma Appelton both work in the library, which offers programs from junior kindergarten through Grade 8. Regular weekly classes are scheduled for kindergarten to Grade 5.

"In the library, they develop reading, writing, speaking, listening and critical thinking skills," Schechter says. "We do all those things here."

She notes that the library sets a monthly theme for the junior school with different activities like reading magazine articles and poems, or doing math sheets and mazes. "My goal is to make the library the hub of the school."

Continued on page B9

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Libraries promote literacy and research skills

Continued from page B8

Schechter stresses that one of the main roles of the library is to promote literacy. To that end, the library has initiated a school-wide reading session on Friday mornings. Every student does silent reading for 10 minutes. "Even the teachers participate. You see the kids reading with their feet up on chairs."

The library designated January as literacy month. Some of the themed activities it generated included collaborative storytelling, where each child contributes to the story to further the plot; dressing up as one's favourite literary character; and donating books to economically disadvantaged children.

Schechter, a teacher for more than 25 years and now in her third year as a teacher-librarian, can hardly contain her enthusiasm. "Working in the library is my passion," she says

She points out that in middle school, students use the library as needed, and most of the focus is on developing research and writing skills.

Promoting research skills is also one of the key roles of the libraries at both campuses of the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's education centre, according to librarians Shirley Markman of the TanenbaumCHAT Wallenberg campus and Deborah Lambert of the TanenbaumCHAT Kimel campus.

Markman, who has been at TanenbaumCHAT for 20 years, has been working with librarian Elena Kvache since 1995.

Markman says she loves her work and welcomes the "tremendous changes" in the role of the librarian. "I've gone from keeper of books to information specialist."

She notes that the students are taught to use the library's collection of 15,000 books in Hebrew and English.

However, with the glut of information available, particularly online, a focus of her work is teaching critical thinking skills.

"The students need to sift and sort through the information... to find relevant information," she says. "They need to think critically to evaluate the information on the Internet. We give them a checklist so they see whether or not a site is a good academic source."

She says that the library subscribes "to carefully selected databases" with magazines and journals, and students are also encouraged to use the databases of the public library, which can be accessed through the Internet.

According to Markman, a key role of the librarian is to be a support to the students and teachers to enhance the curriculum. "We work closely with the teaching staff."

She says the teachers give the librarians assignments. "We research the topic to see what resources will be most useful... We show students which databases are appropriate."

She describes the library, which has 38 computers, as a busy place, where students often gather to do homework or assignments.

"We're filled to capacity most periods of the day."

The library at the TanenbaumCHAT Kimel campus – a wireless environment with 11 computers in the library and 25 in an adjacent room – also draws a lot of students, the librarian says. "It's a fantastic library. I think it's the most beautiful part of the school with all the glass and natural light."

For United Synagogue Day School, Beth Tikvah branch's literacy month celebrations, students listened to storytellers, took part in story contests and dressed up as their favourite storybook characters. From left are Grade 2 student David Ciss and senior kindergarten student Karen Ciss as characters from the Harry Potter series.

Lambert, who is assisted by Rabbi Ira Berman and Linda Costa, has been at the school since the beginning of this academic year. After a long stint as a medical librarian, she says she is pleased she made the switch to an academic environment.

"It's an opportunity to work with hard-working, motivated students. It's a privilege to have the opportunity to work here with such an excellent calibre of colleagues."

She says that new students get an orientation to the library in September to become familiar with the resources available to them. "We have a nice collection of print material."

Like Markman, Lambert stresses the importance of using databases at public libraries and teaching the students how to critically appraise online information sources.

She says helping students develop research skills is very gratifying. "I love what I do... I'm a lifelong learner and I want to instil that love of learning in the students."

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Non-denominational private schools favoured by some Jewish parents

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Jewish parents who want their children to get a private school education aren't feeling confined to choosing Jewish private schools.

With a number of options in the Greater Toronto Area, including Upper Canada College (UCC), Toronto French School (TFS), Crestwood School, Havergal College and The York School, some Jewish students opt for a non-denominational private school education.

Shane Altbaum, a former UCC student who studied there from Grade 7 until OAC, was a Jewish student at the school.

He said that when he asked his parents to switch him out of United Synagogue Day School (USDS), it sparked a debate within the family.

"I didn't like the Jewish day school system. It just wasn't for me. I told my parents I wanted to leave," said Altbaum, a 28-year-old recent law school graduate.

"It was a big issue. All my brothers were attending school at USDS for grade school and my brothers ended up at [The Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto]. I was the first one, really, to not go to a Jewish high school."

He said that his parents, who raised a traditional family that keeps kosher and observes Jewish holidays, were concerned about whether their son would stay connected to Judaism if he went to a non-Jewish private school.

But in the end, they looked into UCC and suggested that school as an alternative.

Parents were concerned that son would lose connection to Judaism

He said that although it wasn't his parents' first choice to have him drop out of the Jewish day school system, they eventually gave in to the idea of having him at another private school.

"They weren't worried about anti-Semitism or anything like that, but they were concerned that I was going to lose my Yiddishkeit, my Jewish education, and if anything – it's funny – I think I found it more at UCC," Altbaum said, adding that there were still about four or five Jewish students in each class.

"At USDS, everyone was Jewish... and you don't think about being Jewish because everyone is Jewish. It kind of shelters you in that way. But when you go into a place like UCC, you know you're Jewish," he said.

UCC graduate Shane Altbaum

"You're forced to compare the way you were brought up thinking, with the fact that other people haven't been brought up the same way."

He said that made him confront the way his culture differed from that of his non-Jewish peers.

"When you see more of the colours of the multicultural mosaic, you see your own colour better. Keeping kosher for example, something I've done my whole life, at USDS it wasn't a big deal because a bunch of the kids keep kosher," Altbaum said.

"But at UCC, when I was keeping kosher and I would go out with the guys and they would be eating chicken wings and I'd be eating a fish sandwich, it was a part of me. Being Jewish was something that became more a part of my identity, and I was more proud of it, more proud of having my own [customs]."

He said that he doesn't know if his connection to Judaism would have been weaker had he started going to UCC at a younger age, because his parents are so traditional and reminded him and his siblings every day of their Jewishness.

He said his strong Jewish identity is probably a combination of his upbringing and his years at USDS, and he would consider sending his own kids to a non-Jewish private school on the condition that in their younger years, they would have a strong Jewish foundation and education.

Continued on page B13

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Leo Baeck

Student began to reconnect after graduation

Continued from page B12

Jess Thalman, a 20-year-old York University visual arts student, is also a product of the non-Jewish private school system, but her experience is very different from Altbaum's as she was enrolled in the Toronto French School for her entire pre-secondary education.

Jess Thalman

"My mom felt that I needed a bilingual, co-educational experience and non-denominational was the best way to go for me," Thalman said.

"We've always talked about whether TFS was the best decision for me and re-evaluating it and thinking about maybe transferring to another school."

Thalman said her mother often expressed that she would have liked her and her brother to go to a Jewish school, but she ultimately decided that French-speaking skills were more important.

"If my mom ever had doubts, she could teach us [about Judaism] herself or send us to Sunday school on the side."

She said she did attend Sunday school for a little bit, but she eventually stopped because even though her family observed the High Holidays and identified as culturally Jewish, she had trouble connecting to her Jewish heritage.

"In my grade, which was about 60 people, I think there were only about four other kids who were Jewish," she said, adding that she didn't have any Jewish friends growing up.

"When I was younger, I felt really disconnected from my Jewish culture and heritage. I never had a bat mitzvah. When I was growing up, I found it difficult to connect, but now that I have left TFS and I am on my own, I'm older, I find that reconnecting with it is much easier."

She said that once she graduated from TFS, she began to consciously seek out Jewish experiences in hopes of connecting to her Jewish roots.

"I do feel like being enclosed in that kind of preppy private school environment did have an effect. It was harder."

Since becoming a York student, Thalman joined Hillel and has visited Israel as a Birthright Israel participant.

Thalman said her desire to connect with her Jewish identity happened gradually because, as an artist, she wanted to self-reflect and find her own identity.

She said that if she is in a position to send her kids to private schools, she would choose non-denominational schools because she doesn't think religion is an integral part of a child's education.

"I think it should be separate. I still feel like if I have children, I will bring them up with cultural knowledge of my heritage, but I don't feel like religious schools in general are necessary."

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Jewish day schools always mindful of security

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

In a world where terrorism, gangs, drive-by shootings and random acts of violence are sadly not uncommon, parents have to feel that their children will be secure at school when they drop them off in the morning.

Parents of children in Jewish day schools are no different, with one exception – the threat of terrorist acts is on their radar.

Doron Horowitz, director of community security for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, said Jewish schools and campus groups are still on "heightened alert" due to the recent Israel-Gaza conflict.

Still, Jewish day schools have established protocols of behaviour and reaction for their staff and students in order to deal with almost any emergency.

School now has lockdown drills

Case in point, in June 2007, students and staff at Leo Baeck Day School's north campus were locked down after a brazen daytime robbery at the Promenade Mall – located about one block from the school – saw the armed suspect tramp across the day school's grounds, fire at officers from the schoolyard and threaten children as he attempted to evade the police.

Though he wasn't principal at the time, the school's current principal, Howard Laderman, said his institution is still recovering from the affair and has since implemented more comprehensive measures to deal with any future threats.

He said the new standard at Leo Baeck is to run one or two fire drills, lockdown rehearsals and evacuation practices every year.

Laderman added that prior to his hiring, the school's standard operating procedure didn't include lockdown drills because the school "didn't want to scare the children."

Howard Laderman, principal of Leo Baeck Day School

Lockdowns can occur for different reasons, Laderman said. "It could be for something as simple as a gas leak in the neighbourhood [or] for intruders inside or outside the building."

Laderman said his school lockdown procedures differ, depending on whether the threat is internal or external.

Recalling the Promenade Mall robbery, Laderman said external threats calls for a calm response in which "kids are kept in their classrooms, at their desks, and the doors are locked."

For internal lockdowns, meaning there's an intruder inside the school, he said teachers and students are required to go into their classrooms, go underneath their desks or into a corner. Classroom doors are covered with paper, so no one can see into the rooms.

"As part of our preparedness, our kids all now know that we have a... system," announced over the school's public address system during emergencies, he said.

Laderman said that in case a real emergency arises, various staff have been assigned to take charge of the phones and to liaise with police and emergency services.

He noted internal threats pose more of a challenge than external ones because "you really don't want people walking through the halls" if someone with malicious intent is also roaming about, he said.

Continued on page B15

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Focus is on prevention, education and awareness

Continued from page B14

"So we use our public address system and cellphones to make sure everyone's where they're supposed to be, and if somebody's missing, then it's the principal and one delegate who will go looking for him," Laderman said. "It's a systematic and calm process that works very well here."

Horowitz has helped Leo Baeck and scores of other Jewish day schools beef up security and preparedness across the country.

Part of his mandate, he said, includes the safety and security for all Jewish schools and students in the city, from day schools to university campuses.

He has also written a security handbook that is used by many schools. However, given the sensitive nature of the information within it, Horowitz could not divulge specific strategies currently recommended to schools.

"But it certainly integrates terrorism and emergency management," he said. "In educating schools with security standards, guidelines, threat assessments and helping them conduct security drills... along with working closely with the school staffs... we help them adapt to the different threat levels and react with the appropriate measures."

Horowitz said much of his focus is on prevention, education and "situational awareness," to create a "culture of security awareness, so that we're not simply reacting" to incidents.

He said UJA Federation is "giving *tachlis*"(specific content) to the community and day schools.

"At the end of the day, the objective is that parents will send children to Jewish schools because they understand the federation is providing assistance... with money and expertise in security," he said. "I have a budget that is going towards Jewish schools and agencies for security and training to the best of our ability."

While he would not say what the budget was, Horowitz said that it has increased during his 3-1/2years in his position.

> ***Responses should be rational, not emotional***

"But I am on the ground. I give schools accurate assessments as a professional," he said. "I'm probably the only community security director whose sole purpose is [to provide] the operational expertise and intelligence [and] to give accurate guidelines and recommendations" to the community.

Horowitz said he has been in the business of protecting the Jewish community for more than 20 years.

"Schools have received, are receiving and will continue to receive policies and protocols regarding emergency procedures" from his office, he said.

"I've also incorporated the police in this platform, so they have a better understanding of what we're doing... and can better respond," Horowitz said. "The average police officer [now] knows where the Jewish schools are and understands the threats of modern-day terrorism or radical Islam's modus operandi, and how schools could be affected."

As a last piece of advice, Horowitz said all security responses need to be guided by "rational" responses and not emotional ones.

"They need to be pragmatic," he said. "Because if I have a plan that nobody can follow, then it doesn't matter. Which is why I work very closely with the schools on a personal basis. I continue to be a resource to all Jewish communities across Canada."

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Live & Learn

DANI helps special needs youths develop skills

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

DANI worker Mike Goldberg entertains summer camp participants with his guitar. [Andrew Laszlo–Twins Photo and Video photo]

Preparing a meal, setting a table for dinner, stuffing envelopes, shopping for necessities or gifts, reading a story – these are the kinds of skills we take for granted and expect any teenager to have more or less mastered.

But for some young adults with disabilities, these basic life skills can be a challenge. Enter DANI, a grassroots organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of special needs children and integrating them within the Jewish community.

Formed in 2005 by parents with special needs children, DANI offers a number of programs throughout the week in pursuit of its mandate: Develop And Nurture Independence.

Young adults (most range in age from 21 to 27) participate in DANI's "lifestyle group" from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Their day includes morning prayers, Jewish learning, kosher meals, outings and sports.

"Independence and life skills are really big in our vocabulary," said Kathy Laszlo, co-founder and co-director of DANI, along with Susie Sokol. "Nobody sits here to do nothing."

DANI's clients – six participate in the weekday events, the number grows to 16 on weekends – meet at a rented house in the Bathurst Street and Sheppard Avenue area that serves as the organization's learning centre. Morning prayers launch each day, followed by a lesson on a Judaic topic.

Monday is "recreational day," which could see the group head to an aquatic centre for a swim, followed by a trip to a public library for a reading class to develop literary skills, Laszlo said.

Monday concludes with basketball games – the boys play at Yeshivat Or Chaim, the girls at Ulpanat Orot. The games are so popular with the wider community that "we have more volunteers than clients," Laszlo said. "They love to come… If you see 25 guys in the gym, I'm sure you can't point out who's who. They just need to be together. They're just guys. Who cares if they can read or not, or brush their teeth or not. Some of the clients are great players and some of the volunteers are not. It's hard to see who is abled and who is disabled."

Wednesday is the cooking and baking day. Clients make pizza and Israeli salad (which entails lots of chopping), bake muffins and prepare soups, pasta and falafel. Guests are invited for lunch and the clients serve and clean up, Laszlo said.

"On Wednesday, we turn the place into a mini-restaurant," she said.

Fridays, which end early for Shabbat during the winter months, sees the clients making challah and enjoying a Kabalat Shabbat program. Sometimes, the day includes a community-oriented program, like visiting seniors, or a lifestyle event such as shopping or an outing to a mall.

Continued on page B17

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Gala dinner will be held this month

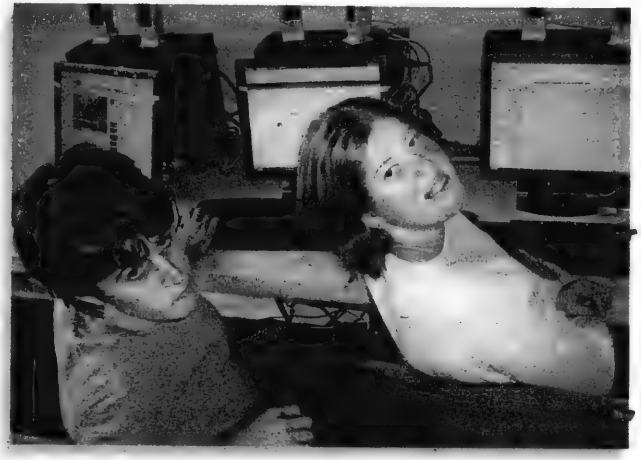
Continued from page B16

Sundays are DANI's most popular day in terms of participation. Programming begins at 1 p.m. to accommodate families that take part in Chabad-Lubavitch's Friendship Circle. Participants transfer "seamlessly" to DANI's facility for programs that continue to 4 p.m. That offers stressed families almost a full day of respite, Laszlo said.

Recently, the Sunday clients enjoyed "chesed day," which was designed to teach the value of charitable work. Everyone contributed $5 and the clients ventured to a dollar store to shop for basic items such as toiletries and cards, which were distributed to Yellow Brick House, a shelter for women and children, along with a note saying, "We're thinking about you."

"It is very important for our kids to feel they can give back to their community," said Laszlo. "Usually, they are receiving."

Recently, the group celebrated Tu b'Shvat, Israel's arbour day, with a seder led by a rabbi. Other programs include a TTC trip downtown "for subway training."



Danny Laszlo, left, visits WindReach Farm as part of DANI's summer camp program. Racheli Feinstat, far right, and Talya Sokol take part in a computer skills program.

DANI receives no government or community funding. Clients' families pay $60 per day during the week, and $40 on Sunday. Clients receive lunch and snacks. These sums cover only a portion of the costs, which includes rent to the Magen David Sephardic Congregation (DANI is located in what used to be the rabbi's home) and salaries for two professional staff. The organization supplements its income from private donations and its annual gala dinner. This year's event will be held on March 25 at the Toronto Centre for the Arts.

Laszlo said a cookbook is being planned, including celebrity recipes and stories about the clients.

Preparing meals is certainly a big part of the life-skills development stressed at DANI. It's also part of a long-term plan. "We do it with the future in mind," said Laszlo. "Our plan is, God willing, not so far down the road to open a coffee house/restaurant. So we're training the kids to work in such an environment."

Integrating clients into the job market is also part of DANI's long-term goals. "We would love to have our clients get employment or volunteer positions, but to do that you need the right environment. They need support to get there, to do the best they can to the best of their abilities."

Laszlo said that can be accomplished if a liaison person tags along to act as a "buffer… between the client and the workplace."

In the meantime, DANI will continue to serve "all kinds of clients with all different levels [of skills]. We change the environment so they can function the best they can," Laszlo said.

For more information about DANI, visit www.dani-canada.com.

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Mail to: 2795 Bathurst St., P.O. Box #41032, Toronto, Ont. M6B 4J6
Outreach Centre: 3089 Bathurst St., #310 (at Lawrence)
Executive Director: Julius Ciss
Education Director: Rabbi Michael Skobac
Tel: 416-789-0020 Fax: 416-789-0030
E-mail: canada@jewsforjudaism.org
Website: www.jewsforjudaism.org
Jews for Judaism is an international organization dedicated to countering the multi-million dollar efforts of missionary and cult groups that target Jews for conversion. We also connect Jewish people to the spiritual depth and wisdom of Judaism. We accomplish these goals through a variety of free educational programs, materials and counseling services.

JIAS (JEWISH IMMIGRANT AID SERVICES (TORONTO)
4600 Bathurst Street
Toronto, Ont. M2R 3V3
Contact Name: Joanna Sasson Morrison
Title: Coordinator of Community Development Services
Tel: 416-630-6481 x30
Fax: 416-630-1376
Shindman/ShaRna Scholarships provide significant help to support post-secondary education of immigrant youth. In addition, the scholarship assists adult immigrants to obtain professional training, re-certify or upgrade their skills. For 30 years, this scholarship has helped recipients advance their skills through education, in order to rebuild their lives in Toronto.

NA'AMAT CANADA
272 Codsell Ave.,
Toronto, Ont. M3H 3X2
Tel: 416-636-5425 Fax: 416-636-5238
E-mail: na'am@bellnet.ca
Website: www.naamat.com
A dynamic fighter for women's rights in Israel and Canada. Na'amat Israel, with 350,000 members, has dramatically affected the lives of women by providing child care, high schools, shelters and counselling centres for family abuse and legal advisory clinics. In Canada, Na'amat sponsors Bialik Hebrew Day School, Camp Gesher, Habonim-Dror Zionist Youth Movement, a Free Legal Aid Advisory Clinic and provides school supplies for children living in shelters.

Consultants/ Counsellors

AMBITIONS EDUCATIONAL CONSULTING
Judy Libman,
44 Strathearn Rd.,
Toronto, Ont. M6C 1R6
Tel: 416-780-0288 Fax: 416-781-3549
E-mail: jlibman@ambitions.ca
Website: www.ambitions.ca
Personal academic counseling for h.s. and post-secondary students. Find the right university or college program in Canada; specialist in US college admissions. Advising for academic problems. Career, graduate and professional school counseling; extensive experience in medical school admissions. Judy Libman is a long-time educator, a consultant to Toronto private schools, and the recipient of York University's highest teaching award.

ASTROFF CONSULTANTS INC.
President: Robert Astroff
250 Heath Street West, Suite 1502
Toronto, ON M5P 3L4
Tel: 416-929-6110 Fax: 416-546-1174
Email: info@astroffconsultants.com
Website: www.astroffconsultants.com
Astroff Consultants Inc. offers strategic advice throughout the university application process. We assist students gain admission to undergraduate, graduate and professional schools, including medicine, law, business and dentistry in Canada, the U.S. and overseas. Our services include academic planning, review of personal statements/application essays, and mock interview simulations.

Day Schools

ASSOCIATED HEBREW SCHOOLS OF TORONTO
Director of Education: Dr. Mark Smiley
Executive Director: Arthur Landa
Administration Office, 252 Finch Ave. W., Toronto, Ont. M2R 1M9
Tel: 416-494-7666
Website: www.agreatschool.com

Bet Hayeled (Nursery, JK, SK)
Vice-Principals: Eynat Katz (Kamin)
Tel: 905-889-3998 ext. 2
Ora Shulman (Posluns)
Tel: 416-787-1872

Kamin Education Centre (Nursery-Gr. 5)
300 Atkinson Ave., Thornhill, Ont. L4J 8A2
Principals:
Kathy Friedman, Sandy Rabinowitz
Tel: 905-889-3998

Posluns Education Centre (Nursery-Gr. 5)
18 Neptune Dr., Toronto, Ont. M6A 1X1
Principal: Eric Golombek
Tel: 416-787-1872

Danilack Middle School (Gr. 6-8)
Hurwich Education Centre, 252 Finch Ave. W., Toronto, Ont. M2R 1M9
Principals: Sheldon Diamond, Betty Katzman
Tel: 416-494-7666
Associated is a truly great school offering its students an excellent educational program rich in scholarship and imbued with Jewish values. Associated has a proud history of making Jewish Education accessible, opening its doors to children from across the community and meeting the individual needs of a broad spectrum of learners. For 100 years, Associated graduates have become leaders in their respective fields and role models to the community.

BIALIK HEBREW DAY SCHOOL
2760 Bathurst Street,
Toronto Ont. M6B 3A1
Tel: 416-783-3346
Website: www.bialik.ca
Bialik focuses on developing life-long learners in our enriched, intellectually stimulating academic environment. We offer a challenging, multi-language curriculum. Students learn Hebrew, English, Yiddish and French within our Jewish and General Studies programs. Bialik develops a living connection to, and a love of, Israel and Jewish culture. We welcome children in junior kindergarten through grade 8 from a broad spectrum of Jewish affiliation and observance. We offer before and after school care as well as financial assistance from JK to grade 8.

EITZ CHAIM SCHOOLS
Dean: Rabbi I. Pliner
Menahel Girls' School: Rabbi M. Gewirtz
Menahel Maharal Track: Rabbi Y. Rennert
Directors, Early Childhood: Mrs. N. Cohen, Mrs. Rivki Goldstein
Executive Director: Mr. Elias Levy
Director of Development: Mr. Joshua Levi

Viewmount Campus
1 Viewmount Ave.
Tel: 416-789-4366
E-mail: view@eitzchaim.com

Patricia Campus Business Office
475 Patricia Ave.,
Tel: 416-225-1187
E-mail: patricia@eitzchaim.com

Spring Farm Campus
80 York Hill Blvd.
Tel: 905-764-6633
E-mail: spring@eitzchaim.com
Rooted in tradition with over 90 years of history, Yeshivas Eitz Chaim is dedicated to instilling within its students the foundations for living a Torah-observant life. Eitz Chaim provides the finest Torah and General Studies education in an environment filled with the love of Yiddishkeit and the Jewish people.

FIELDSTONE DAY SCHOOL
2999 Dufferin Street,
Toronto, Ont. M6B 3T4
Contact Name: Jonathan Harris
Title: Principal
Tel: 416-487-7381 Fax: 416-487-8190
Website: www.fieldstonedayschool.org
E-mail: jharris@fieldstonedayschool.org
Fieldstone is a unique co-educational, non-denominational school for students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade Twelve. In our dynamic and nurturing environment, Fieldstone builds self-esteem through academic, co-curricular and social success. Our caring and patient approach ensures that each student is given the opportunity to become happy, productive and successful.

THE LEO BAECK DAY SCHOOL
Director: Dennis H. Grubbs
Tel: 905-709-3636
Fax: 905-709-1999
North Campus: 36 Atkinson Ave, Thornhill, ON L4J 8C9
Principal: Howard Laderman
South Campus: 1950 Bathurst St., Toronto, ON M5P 3K9
Principal: Eric Petersiel
A Reform Jewish Day School, the only one in Toronto, we are committed to excellence in all areas of study. Our academic curriculum features English and French Language Arts, Hebrew/Judaic Studies, Math, Science and Social Studies, enriched by special classes in art, music, drama, computers, library and physical education along with exciting field trips. Leo Baeck is the only International Baccalaureate Candidate School in Canada.

NETIVOT HATORAH DAY SCHOOL
The Jack & Anne Weinbaum Education Centre
Head of School: Dr. Reuven Stern

North Campus: (Nursery- Gr.8)
18 Atkinson Avenue,
Thornhill, Ont. L4J 8C8
Tel: 905-771-1234 Fax: 905-771-1807
www.netivot.com

South Gan Campus: (Nursery, JK, SK)
Located at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation
470 Glencairn Avenue,
Toronto, Ont. M5N 1V8
Tel: 905-771-1234 Fax: 905-771-1807
Netivot HaTorah offers a challenging and exciting curriculum of Judaic and General Studies from Nursery to Gr.8. Netivot HaTorah is committed to addressing the social and intellectual needs of each child in **an atmosphere imbued with Torah, Israel and Derech Eretz.**

OR HAEMET SEPHARDIC SCHOOL (OHSS)
7026 Bathurst St. Thornhill, Ont. L4J 8K3
Menahel: Rabbi Yaron Razak x268
General Studies Principal: Mrs. Sarah Wasserman x229
Tel: 905-669-7654
OHSS provides Orthodox Torah education in accordance with Sephardic practice, focusing on Midot. OHSS' strong commitment to academic excellence is evident in its enriched Judaic and General Studies program standards, set by Torah U'Mesorah and Ontario Ministry of Education and Training. **In everthing we do, learning comes alive at Or HaEmet.**

PAUL PENNA
DOWNTOWN JEWISH DAY SCHOOL
750 Spadina Ave., Miles Nadal JCC, Toronto, Ont. M5S 2J2
Principal: Janet Nish-Lapidus
President: Aviva Rajsky
Tel: 416-928-3537 Fax: 416-533-7471
E-mail: info@djds.ca
Website: www.djds.ca
The Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School is Toronto's only Jewish Day School located in the heart of downtown at the Miles Nadal JCC. We are committed to academic excellence, creative and artistic expression, and the development of critical thinking skills. Our enriched and integrated curriculum weaves together Jewish and general facets to develop a meaningful Jewish identity. Registering now for SK to Grade 8. Our Grade 7 & 8 Middle School welcomes students with or without prior Jewish education. Subsidies and personalized tours available.

THE TORONTO HESCHEL SCHOOL
819 Sheppard Ave. W., Toronto, Ont. M3H 2T3
Principal: Ms. Gail Baker
Tel: 416-635-1876 Fax: 416-635-1800
E-mail: info@torontoheschel.org
Website: www.torontoheschel.org
The Toronto Heschel School, offers a challenging, innovative and integrated curriculum. Children are taught to think creatively and consider global, environmental and ethical issues through a Jewish lens. Small classes and low student-teacher ratios ensure high academic achievement within a positive and nurturing learning environment. Heschel students are life-long learners. **We inspire our students to Make a Difference.**

UNITED SYNAGOGUE DAY SCHOOL
Administration House
3072 Bayview Ave.
Director of Admissions: Rosemary Tile
Bathurst Campus, 1700 Bathurst St.
Bayview Campus, 3080 Bayview Ave.
Lebovic Campus, Bathurst & Weldrick
Tel: 416-224-8737 ext. 137
Fax: 416-225-9108
Email: rosemary.tile@usds.ca
Website: www.usds.ca
USDS's "made-to-measure learning" offers academic excellence from Nursery to grade 8. Our general and Jewish studies curriculum emphasizes technology, creative arts, music, physical education, and Jewish values. Alternative Jewish studies programs offer a portion of the Jewish studies curriculum in English. The Kinder Connection: Founders have teamed up with USDS to launch an innovative JK/SK language and math program! Lebovic Campus is opening soon. Limited spaces available for 2009.

Extra-Curricular Activities

THE RENANIM YOUTH SINGERS
at The Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue, 55 Yeomans Rd., Toronto, Ont. M3H 3J7
Artistic Director: Susan Michaels
Tel: 416-449-2296
E-mail: susan.michaels@rogers.com
Website: www.renanimchoirs.com
As "The Musical Voice of Jewish Youth," the auditioned teens of this multi-award winning, pluralistic choir earn community service hours when performing for organizations throughout the GTA, during educational recordings and on tour. During weekly rehearsals, students develop vocalization and musicianship skills as they socialize, develop self-confidence and learn the importance of community service.

High Schools

TanenbaumCHAT
(The Anne & Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto)
Director of Education: Paul J. Shaviv, M.A., M.Phil.

Wallenberg Campus:
200 Wilmington Avenue
Toronto, ON M3H 5J8
Tel: 416-636-5984
Fax: 416-636-7717
Email: info@tanenbaumchat.org

Kimel Centre: 9600 Bathurst Street
Vaughan ON L6A 3Z8
Tel: 905-787-8772
Fax: 905-787-8773
Email: info@tanenbaumchat.org
Toronto's Community High School (1,500 students, Co-Ed, G9 – 12) operates on two parallel campuses. Our top-rate programme offers every child a unique springboard for life in a safe, supporting academic and social environment. At TanenbaumCHAT, students make lifelong friendships!

Pre-Schools

ADATH ISRAEL NURSERY SCHOOL
37 Southbourne Avenue,
Toronto, Ont. M3H 1A4
Contact Name: Wendy Steinberg-Himmel
Title: Pre-School Program Director
Tel: 416-635-5340 x326
Fax: 416-635-1629
Adath Israel Preschool Department offers year-round programming in a nurturing and creative learning environment that supports the growth of the whole child and models Jewish living. Our drop-off Nursery school services 2 and 3 year olds. Our Yeladim Programs for tots and caregivers run all year including March break and Summer programs.

LOVING CARE CENTRE
601 Clark Ave. W.,
Thornhill, Ont. L4J 8E1
Supervisor: Devorah
Tel: 905-764-6663 Fax: 905-764-0743
Offering a fun, nurturing English/-Hebrew/Heritage education, 18 months through Sr. Kindergarten. Graduates have proven success in Gr. 1 readiness in public & Jewish day school systems. Letterland, Aleph Bait, Early Math & Science skills are emphasized. Specialized Drama/Parsha program. ECE & Certified Hebrew Teachers. 3 Playgrounds. Full course nutritious meals prepared daily. Hours: 7:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m., 12 months/year, includes a special 2 month summer camp program. Gov't. subsidies available.

TEMPLE SINAI NURSERY SCHOOL
210 Wilson Ave.,
Toronto, Ont. M5M 3B1
Principal: Bibi Golberg
Tel: 416-487-3281 Fax: 416-487-5499
Actively participate in your child's education. Help out monthly in your child's classroom and witness their growth and development in our enriched curriculum, including reading and math readiness. Get to know their teachers and friends while experiencing Shabbat, Jewish Holiday Celebrations, Mad Science Programs, trips, gym, playground and Special Events.

Private Schools

ACADEMY FOR GIFTED CHILDREN - P.A.C.E.
12 Bond Cres.,
Richmond Hill, Ont. L4E 3K2
Director: Barbara Rosenberg
Tel: 905-773-0997 Fax: 905-773-4722
The Academy for Gifted Children - P.A.C.E. provides high-powered learning experiences to challenge bright minds and ensure intellectual growth and achievement, while simultaneously addressing the social-emotional needs of the child. P.A.C.E. offers a differentiated education, built on greater depth and breadth of instruction, and a more complex approach to learning.

DON VALLEY ACADEMY
4576 Yonge St., Ste. 408,
Toronto, Ont. M2N 6N4
Contact Name: Alex Evans
Title: Principal
Tel: 416-223-7561 Fax: 416-223-0065
Are you concerned with your child's current high school? Are there external factors preventing your child from excelling? Don Valley Academy is committed to building and refining research, time management, and general study skills, while providing a friendly and supportive learning environment. The school has a mission to provide the resources necessary to challenge its students to reach their full potential, and to achieve their academic goals. For further information, please call 416-223-7561.

THE LINDEN SCHOOL
10 Rosehill Ave.,
Toronto, Ont. M4T 1G5
Head of Admissions: Ina Izzakely
Tel: 416-966-4406 Fax: 416-966-9736
Our dynamic girl-centred curriculum provides a superior academic program within a closely-knit and nurturing community. Small classes, taught by specialists, combine rigorous

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Live & Learn

Helping children understand importance of prayer

By LEILA SPEISMAN
Staff Reporter

The story is told that soon after the Holocaust ended, Rabbi Eliezer Silver and Dayan Grunfeld were trying to reclaim Jewish children who had been hidden in convents and Christian orphanages. Some of the rescuers denied that they had any Jewish children.

Only when the rabbis began to sing the Shema, did the children, long separated from their roots, cover their eyes, as is traditional during part of the Shema, and cry for their mothers.

Such is the power of prayer.

For Jews, prayer is a hallmark of our faith. The conclusion of Unetaneh Tokef on Rosh Hashanah avers that prayer, along with repentance and charity, will annul any bad decrees God had planned.

Adults recognize this. We may pray as part of our daily religious routine, on a yahrzeit, for health, for a spouse, for our children's welfare, for comfort.

But one question often asked is how to make children appreciate the significance of prayer.

Youngsters these days, after all, are accustomed to instant gratification, and realize very early that material things come from the adults around them.

Rabbi Ephraim Applebaum has been a Hebrew studies teacher at Eitz Chaim Schools in Toronto for many years. Prayer is part of the school's daily routine. Children, he said, are inspired by stories about the power of prayer, about specific reasons to pray, such as for someone who is ill, for Israel, for the poor.

Along with this, they must see that praying is a serious thing. "Just as one must be quiet and pay attention in science class, so too they must learn to behave the same way during davening. They have to see that it is not a joke, that one needs to show respect."

Children learn by having role models, Rabbi Applebaum said, both in school and at home. He added wryly that they should learn that during prayer, one should pray – not discuss baseball or the stock market.

Rabbi Moshe Yeres, vice-principal of Jewish studies at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's northern campus, said that high school students are able to grasp a higher level of thinking, such as whether God really needs us to pray, why we need prayer altogether, and a truly difficult concept – what happens if prayer doesn't work?

TanenbaumCHAT Kimel campus students pray at the morning minyan.

Attendance at the daily Shacharit and Minchah services are optional, he said, although many students come for the camaraderie, or just because they want to. They lead the services, including reading from the Torah on the appropriate days and giving a weekly dvar Torah on Fridays, experiences they find very positive.

Certain prayers are highlighted, Rabbi Yeres noted, such as Yom Hashoah and Yom Ha'atzmaut services, as are noteworthy events, such as the recent Mumbai massacres and last year's attack on the Mercaz Harav yeshiva in Jerusalem.

Praying is not a subject like Gemarah, for which you can gauge and assign a mark indicating a student's improvement or proficiency, he said.

Seymour Epstein, senior vice-president of the Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto (Mercaz), said one must recognize that children "can pray in different ways, and learning tfillah, prayer, must be as differentiated as any other learning. Some pray with silence, others with a picture in their mind, others through music. Some use a siddur with ease, others need their own words."

Small children, Epstein said, need a concrete context for prayer. For instance, he suggested, it might help them to connect the mezonot blessing for foods such as cake or other bread-like items with the aroma of chocolate chip cookies baking.

Like both Rabbi Applebaum and Rabbi Yeres, Epstein stressed the importance of modelling.

"A teacher of tfillah must be comfortable in the world of tfillah and offer a model to his or her students."

Directory of Live & Learn Advertisers

Cont'd from B18

academic standards with inquiry-based instruction and experiential learning. Linden offers an array of co-curricular activities including athletics, social justice, drama, music, and arts programs.

Special Education

REENA
Toby & Henry Battle Developmental Centre
927 Clark Ave. W.,
Thornhill, Ont. L4J 8G6
President & CEO: Sandy Keshen
Tel: 905-889-6484 Fax: 905-889-3827
Reena is a non-profit social service agency supporting individuals with a developmental disability, and their families through residential and social work programs. Community day, evening, respite and Sunday programs focus on recreation, education, life skill/vocational training, support and leisure. Charitable donations can be made through the Reena Foundation at 905-763-8254, ext. 3033, or toll free 877-324-4141, ext. 3034.

YORK PAEDIATRIC THERAPY SERVICES
10520 Yonge St., Ste. 21,
Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 3C7
Owner/Director: Rhona Feldt-Stein
Tel: 905-737-9680 Fax: 905-737-2445
E-mail: info@yorkpaediatrics.com
Is your child experiencing difficulties with handwriting, gross and fine motor skills, development, muscle tone, coordination, sensory integration or learning? We specialize in maximizing your child's potential by providing comprehensive assessments and proactive treatment using Handwriting groups/camps, Sensory Integration, Neurodevelopmental Therapy, Medek and perceptual-motor training. Staff are registered Occupational, Physical and Speech/Language Therapists.

Supplementary Schools

AHAVAT YISRAEL HEBREW SCHOOL
54 Glen Park Ave.
Toronto, Ont. M6B 2C2
Director: Mrs. Leslie Shapiro
Tel: 416-781-8088 Fax: 416-781-4458
Website:
www.ahavatyisraelhebrewschool.com

Ventura Park Middle School
121 Worth Blvd./ Thornhill
Principal: Mrs. Leslie Shapiro

New! Thornhill Woods
Stephen Lewis Middle School
555 Autumn Hill Blvd., Thornhill
York Mills Collegiate Institute
490 York Mills Rd., Toronto
Principal: Mrs. Suri Nulman
Bais Yaakov Elementary School
15 Saranac Blvd., Toronto
Principal: Mrs. Esther Cohen
Provides a creative, enjoyable learning experience for those interested in a once or optional twice a week program. The school, in its 17th year, offers an enriching curriculum of reading, writing, language, prayers, Israel and holidays taught from a Traditional perspective. Remedial and enrichment reading programs. Special events include challah baking, Purim Carnival and Passover seder. Affiliated with MERCAZ, the Centre for the Enhancement of Jewish Learning

BEIT RAYIM SYNAGOGUE AND HEBREW SCHOOL
1118 Centre St., Ste. 209,
Thornhill, Ont. L4J 7R9
Tel: 905-889-0276 Fax: 905-889-4113
E-mail: school@beitrayim.org
Website: www.beitrayim.org
Beit Rayim Hebrew School, located in York Region fosters a strong Jewish identity through innovative Jewish education that touches the hearts and inspires the minds of young Jews.

BETH SHOLOM HEBREW SCHOOL
1445 Eglinton Ave. W.,
Toronto, Ont. M6C 2E6
Principal: Karen L. Goodis, RJE
Tel: 416-783-6103, #225
E-mail: karen@bethsholom.net
Beth Sholom Hebrew School offers small classes, Hebrew language and prayer skills; Judaica, music and outstanding Family Education programs. Enrichment for former day school students; full time special education class for students with special needs and a dedicated professional staff.

BETH TORAH CONGREGATION
47 Glenbrook Ave.
Toronto, ON M6B 2L7
Director of Youth Education:
Amy Goldsweig
Tel: 416-782-4495 ext. 25
Fax: 416-782-4496
Beth Torah Congregation offers a positive educational experience to members and non-members alike. We run programs for Grades 1-8 that emphasize the integration of Jewish tradition in our daily lives. "Adventure Judaism: Education for Kids Who Want to Stay That Way" teaches a living Judaism for the 21st Century.

CONGREGATION DARCHEI NOAM
864 Sheppard Avenue West
Toronto, M3H 2T5
Director of Youth Education & Programming: Elliott Michaelson
Tel: 416-638-4783
E-mail: elliottdn@bellnet.ca
Website: www.darcheinoam.on.ca
Experience the joy of education at Darchei Noam! Our Reconstructionist community is traditional, egalitarian and inclusive. Our Sunday program starts in Kindergarten and features Torah Values, Prayer and Hebrew, Holidays, Social Action and Israel. For children who want more, our innovative Kesharim Wednesday program introduces Modern Hebrew and Journeys through our Past. Non-members are welcome!

DOWNTOWN JEWISH COMMUNITY SCHOOL (c/o Miles Nadal JCC)
750 Spadina Ave.,
Toronto, Ont. M5S 2J2
Principal: Joan Schoenfeld
Tel: 416-924-6212, x112
Fax: 416-924-0442
E-mail: joan@djcs.org
Website: www.djcs.org
Pluralistic Community School, 200+ students, providing sense of appreciation, enjoyment in Judaism; including concepts and skills necessary to live a Jewish life and feel comfortable in a Jewish setting. JK-1: Sunday morning delightful activity-oriented program. Grades 2-7 Sunday only or Sunday/Wednesday options. Unique Sunday brunch high school program with Marsha Slavens.

ORAYNU CHILDREN'S SCHOOL
131 Fenn Avenue (Bayview/401)
Tel: 416-385-3910
Redefining Jewish celebration for cultural, secular and humanist Jews. School (JK-Gr. 7) offers non-theistic study of history, culture, values, plus music, family education, holidays. 2-Year Bar/Bat Mitzvah - exceptional ceremony in English! Children choose personal Jewish hero projects. Interfaith families welcomed, respected; you truly belong. Oraynu... not your ordinary congregation!

SHAAR SHALOM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
65 Brownridge Dr.,
Thornhill, Ont. L4J 7R8
Supervisor: Hava Greenberg
Tel: 905-889-4975 Fax: 905-889-1575
Highlights: 2 days a week. Intensive Hebrew reading program, excellent Family Education, Arts and Music programs, Remediation and enrichment available, synagogue skills. We are committed to helping children develop the skills and tools they need to become committed adult Jews. Programs designed for students JK-Gr. 7. Affiliated with the BJE and United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. Program held at convenient location at Brownridge Public School in Thornhill, behind Promenade Mall.

TORONTO'S SECULAR JEWISH COMMUNITY SCHOOL (TSJCS)
585 Cranbrooke Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M6A 2X9
Education Director: David Lipovitch, Ph.D.
Tel: (416) 789-5502
Fax: (416) 789-5981
Email: info@tsjcs.com
Website: www.tsjcs.com
TSJCS – your secular alternative to Jewish education offers these creative and stimulating programs: Kinder Kapers (toddlers & their grownups); Morris Winchevsky School (SK-Grade 5 students taught in 5-week thematic modules); Secular B'nai Mitzvah (2-year program for Grades 6 & 7 with a group ceremony. Low student-teacher ratio. Families of diverse backgrounds welcome.

Tutoring

MATH MASTERS
4576 Yonge St., Ste. 408,
Toronto, Ont. M2N 6N4
Contact: John Tzelardoni
Title: Program Director
Tel: 416-223-6284 Fax: 416-223-0065
Whether your child requires private tutoring or an enrichment program, Math Masters will provide the appropriate support to ensure that the student's goals will be achieved. Our tutoring program will increase confidence, knowledge, and academic achievement. Our enrichment programs will increase overall knowledge and confidence, while preparing the student for future studies. For further information, please call 416-223-MATH.

REINGOLD TUTORING
North York, Thornhill, Richmond Hill
Contact: Stephanie Reingold
Tel: 647-519-4771
www.ReingoldTutoring.com offers customized in-home, one-on-one math and science tutoring for students in high school and elementary. We teach, motivate and boost the confidence of our students. We are there for you at all times of the day and promise to be available when you need us most. Please call 647-519-4771.

Universities

HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM
3080 Yonge St., Ste. 5024, P.O. Box 65
Toronto, Ont. M4N 3N1
Director, Academic Affairs:
Moshik Galanty
Tel: 416-485-1222
Email: mgalanty@cfhu.org
Website: www.cfhu.org
Ranked #1 Israeli University in academic excellence and in the top world universities ranking; 6 Nobel prize recipients are Hebrew U graduates; students from over 70 countries; year/semester programs for all levels; largest modern Hebrew program; NEW - comfortable facilities in Scopus Student Village; opportunities for internship & volunteer work around Jerusalem; extensive cultural & social activities.

ISRAEL & GOLDA KOSCHITZKY CENTRE FOR JEWISH STUDIES, YORK UNIVERSITY
Vanier 241, York University
4700 Keele St., Toronto, Ont. M3J 1P3
Director: Prof. Sara R. Horowitz
Tel: 416-736-5823 Fax: 416-736-5344
BA Jewish Studies (Jewish Studies Stream), BEd (Jewish Teacher Education Program), MEd, MA and PhD (by department), Certificate in Hebrew and Judaic Studies, Exchange Programs, in Israel and Europe. Courses in Hebrew Education, Classical Judaism, Philosophy, History, Sociology, Women's Studies, Holocaust, Sephardic Studies, film, Israel and Middle East.

THE VERED JEWISH CANADIAN STUDIES PROGRAM, UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
Institute of Canadian Studies
52 University St.,
Ottawa, Ont. K1N 6N5
Director: Prof. Seymour Mayne
Tel: 613-562-5111 Fax: 613-562-5216
E-mail: mayne@uOttawa.ca
Website: www.vered.uOttawa.ca
The Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Program offers a variety of courses in Jewish Canadian Studies as well as affiliated courses in Yiddish language and culture. Courses are open to university students as well as members of the community-at-large, who may register as special students or auditors.

Building blocks of life

Counter-clockwise from top left, Or Haemet Sephardic School Grade 1 students Iska Shemesh and Gabi Chaplik learn about animal coverings; Grade 8 mentors at Associated Hebrew Schools' Danilack Middle School; TanenbaumCHAT Wallenberg (southern) campus students Ilana Walters and Nava Rosen prepare challah at a recent Shabbaton; senior kindergarten student Tali Barak tackles a literacy exercise on a SMARTboard interactive whiteboard at Associated Hebrew Schools' Kamin Education Centre in Thornhill; Grade 2 students Zoe Lepholtz and Ethan Glazman of United Synagogue Day School's Beth Tzedec take part in a science program; United Synagogue Day School's Beth Tikvah campus Eco Club received the Ontario EcoSchools' gold certification earlier this winter by eliminating styrofoam, introducing "boomerang" (waste-free) lunches, energy-efficient photocopy machines, blue boxes in every classroom, e-mails instead of paper and eco-friendly cleaning products (pictured from left are: at back, teachers Erin Cooperberg and Sherry Braunstein, and in front, Shaina Benjamin, Justin Veiner, Emily Waldman, Brianna Allice, on floor, and Jamie Kroach); Bialik Hebrew Day School's student council held snack sales during and after the war in Gaza to raise funds for Magen David Adom.

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National

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Hamas claims to have film of Schalit

— *Israel has no information about videotape* —

By AVI ISSACHAROFF
© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — A senior official in the Prime Minister's Office said Monday that Israel does not know anything about a new Hamas videotape showing abducted Israel Defence Forces soldier Gilad Schalit, Israel Radio reported.

The official said Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is using every possible avenue to ensure Schalit's release and will do so until the end of his tenure.

Hamas deputy political bureau chief Moussa Abu Marzouk is in possession of the videotape showing Schalit, who appears in good health, the Kuwaiti newspaper Al Jarida reported Monday.

Hamas associates say the videotape was handed to the Syrian-based Abu Marzouk by Ahmed Jabari, the head of the Hamas military wing, during Abu Marzouk's secret visit to the Gaza Strip late last month.

Aviva Schalit stands in a protest tent on behalf of her captive son, Gilad, opposite the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem. [*Israel photo*]

In addition, Abu Marzouk received a letter handwritten by Schalit, which he then turned over to the Syrian foreign ministry. Abu Marzouk has decided to hold onto the videotape for the time being.

The report said the contents of the tape would be released only after significant progress is made in prisoner exchange negotiations. Abu Marzouk also informed Egyptian officials of the tape's existence.

The public campaign for Schalit's release shifted gears this week as the soldier's parents, Noam and Aviva Schalit, erected a protest tent in front of the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem. The move is meant to apply pressure on Olmert to expedite Schalit's release before his term in office ends later this month.

Schalit's parents left their home in the Galilee to set up the protest tent. "We are leaving the house with very tough feelings. We are leaving in order to save Gilad," Noam Schalit said.

Continued on page 36

Hadassah president beaten in Barbados

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) members and the entire Jewish community are praying for Terry Schwarzfeld, 60, national president of the organization, who, along with her daughter-in-law, Luana Cotsman, was severely beaten Feb. 28 while vacationing in Barbados.

The pair was walking along an isolated stretch of beach at 4 p.m. when they were approached by a would-be robber. When they told him they had nothing to give him, he attacked them with a piece of wood.

Schwarzfeld, who is from Ottawa, was knocked unconscious by one or two blows to the back of her head. She was taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in St. Michael, Barbados, and airlifted back to Canada March 4, where she is being treated at Ottawa Hospital.

As of earlier this week, she was still unconscious and in critical condition, and was being heavily sedated to reduce the swelling and internal bleeding in her brain.

Cotsman, from Guelph, Ont., was also knocked unconscious, but she regained consciousness while still on the beach and was treated in hospital overnight.

Lybron Sobers, assistant superintendent of the Royal Barbados Police Force, told The CJN that "several people have been questioned about the assault," but as of The CJN's deadline, no suspect had been arrested.

Peter Kent, minister of state of foreign affairs (Americas), called the attack an unfortunate, tragic incident, but he said that it is "an exception."

Continued on page 31

Terry Schwarzfeld

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Iran crosses nuclear threshold – please see page 35

The News in Brief

Canada

Canada Stands In

OTTAWA — Canada is representing Israel's diplomatic interests in Venezuela after its president, Hugo Chavez, expelled Israel's diplomats during the Gaza war. Thornhill MP Peter Kent, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (Americas), told the Dominion newspaper that "Canada has agreed to represent Israel's interests in Venezuela," as it does for Israel in Cuba, Kent said.

Cotler To Lead March

OTTAWA — Liberal MP and former federal justice minister Irwin Cotler will lead a rally April 21 at the gates of Auschwitz to protest the followup to the 2001 United Nations anti-racism conference. To lead the rally, being organized by the March of the Living organization, Cotler will leave Geneva, site of the Durban Review Conference, where he will be at conferences countering the anti-racism forum, the March of the Living announced. Canada, Israel and the United States have boycotted the Durban Review Conference because they say it will be a repeat of the 2001 parley, which Jewish groups criticized as anti-Israel and anti-Zionist. March leaders are urging other countries to boycott the conference, slated for April 20-24 in Geneva.

Prof Faces Charge

REGINA — A former math professor at the University of Saskatchewan who heads the National Socialist Party of Canada has been charged with contempt of court for disobeying a Canadian Human Rights Commission order to stop posting hate online. Terry Tremaine faces a charge brought forward by Ottawa lawyer Richard Warman that he posted racist and anti-Semitic material, despite a 2007 order. The material reportedly describes Jews as "highly evolved parasites" and calls for their extermination.

World

Iranian Assets Seized

BUENOS AIRES — Argentina seized five Iranian properties in the Buenos Aires area last week. Justice Minister Alberto Nisman, who heads a probe of the 1994 AMIA Jewish community centre bombing, ordered the seizure. He said the seizure, along with six other Iranian properties seized in 2008, will meet the demands of attack victims' relatives and survivors. If the Iranian owner of the property is found guilty in the attack, his property will be sold and the money given to the victims' survivors. A survivor who was severely injured in the attack on the Buenos Aires centre is seeking $1 million in a civil action. The survivor says the attack was planned by former leaders of Iran and carried out by the Lebanon-based group Hezbollah.

Muslim Man Fined For Killing Jew

SANAA — A Yemen court ruled that a Muslim convicted of killing a Yemeni Jew is mentally incompetent and ordered him to pay a fine.

Retired Yemen air force pilot Abdul Aziz Yahya Hamoud al-Abdi, 39, must pay a fine of about $250,000 (US), the court ruled March 2, for the December murder of Moshe Yaish Nahari, a Hebrew teacher and father of nine.

Abdi had shouted "I am not mad" in the courtroom after his attorneys presented an insanity defence – the same defence that saved him from prison five years ago after he killed his wife. Abdi had told police that he had sent a message to Jews in the neighbourhood that they should either convert to Islam or be killed.

Following the murder, the Yemeni government last month paid to relocate the Jews living in Amran to the capital of Sanaa in order to better protect the community. Some Jews were refusing to move, according to a Yemeni news report. A few hundred Jews still live in Yemen.

Café Owner Sorry

AUCKLAND — A New Zealand café owner who evicted two Israelis from his establishment during Israel's invasion of Gaza apologized. Mustafa Tekinkaya, a Turkish-born Muslim, told Natalie Bennie and her visiting sister, Tamara Shefa, to leave his Mevlana Cafe in Invercargill on the southern tip of New Zealand's South Island after he heard them speak Hebrew to each other.

Waltz With Cesar

PARIS — Waltz With Bashir became the first Israeli film to win a Cesar, a French Oscar. It won a Golden Globe in January but failed to become Israel's first Academy Award winner for best foreign film, despite being favoured. The animated docu-drama about director Ari Folman's experiences in the 1982 Lebanon war was well received in France.

Pius Document Found

ROME — The Vatican last week produced another document to bolster its assertion that Pope Pius XII worked behind the scenes to save Jews in World War II. Vatican Radio said a 1943 document found in a convent in Rome listed the names of 24 people who were to be sheltered by nuns there, in accordance with the pope's desire. Vatican Radio said the document was dated November 1943, just weeks after German occupiers deported 2,000 Roman Jews to Auschwitz. The Vatican said the document provides written evidence of Pius' directives. Jewish critics and other historians have said Pius turned a blind eye to the fate of Jews in the Shoah and want Pope Benedict to delay Pius' beatification until the issue is clarified.

Italy Nixes Durban II

BRUSSELS — Italy is pulling out of the Durban II UN anti-racism conference. Foreign Minister Franco Frattini disclosed the decision March 5 in Brussels, where he was attending a meeting of NATO foreign ministers. Frattini said the decision was made because of "aggressive phrases of an anti-Semitic nature" that were "totally unacceptable" in the draft of a final document to be approved at the Durban Review Conference, which takes place April 20-24 in Geneva. He said the statements "must be eliminated," and that Italy would not take part unless the draft document is changed. The United States has set the same condition to attend, while Israel and Canada also have withdrawn.

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Creative Ideas in Financial Planning

Federation downsizes Mercaz, cuts 10 jobs

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Local Jewish educators are expressing concern over a restructuring plan for the Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education (the Mercaz) that was announced last week, and questions have been raised about details that have yet to be made public.

The plan will eliminate 10 full-time jobs and leave the Mercaz with only four full-time staff in a move that UJA Federation of Greater Toronto says is intended to provide more direct funding to its beneficiary schools.

Last Wednesday, in an e-mail to 20,000 people in its data bank – and in a conference call to lay and professional heads of Jewish schools that took place 90 minutes before the e-mail was sent – federation announced that it would be "streamlining" the Mercaz, the successor to the old Board of Jewish Education, while at the same time increasing financial support for Jewish education.

Although school leaders were not consulted about the decision per se, federation spokesperson Howard English told The CJN that "we're in touch all the time with the education community and with senior educators. They [have] told us that the people who work at the Mercaz are fine, wonderful, dedicated, committed people, but there had to be a change in the way service delivery took place."

As well, English said, "if the [conference] call [had] generated opinions that would have led us to scrap [the announcement], we would have listened."

Redirects savings to education funding

In the call, the changes to the Mercaz were presented as the federation's "intention," and questions and thoughts were requested, he said.

April 3 will be the last day on the job for 10 full-time and two contract employees at the Mercaz, English said. As well, 2-1/2 people (two full-time and one half-time employee) have been reassigned to other duties at the federation, he said.

Four employees will remain on the job, English said. "The likely scenario" is that two of them will be education specialists, he added.

Seymour Epstein, the federation's senior vice-president for the Mercaz, "has been offered a senior position related to Jewish education, with UJA Federation," English said.

Epstein declined to comment for this article, and English would not say which employees are being let go. He did not include Epstein among the 10 full-time employees who will be losing their jobs.

Lou Greenbaum, chair of the Mercaz, said he didn't think it was "appropriate" for him to discuss the changes.

A news release said that employees who will no longer be part of the Mercaz "are being treated sensitively and generously." English said the federation has hired a company to provide relocation counselling, and they will receive "some kind of separation package."

The changes do not have to do with the recent economic downturn and will not save the federation money, English said. "The money being saved is going to direct support for Jewish education."

A report by the federation's task force on Jewish education led to the creation of the Mercaz two years ago. The entity had previously been called the Board of Jewish Education.

This year's restructuring was deemed necessary by "lead professional and lay people at the federation, including lead lay people at the Mercaz," English said. No educational professionals were involved in the decision, he added, but Epstein "was informed about our intentions a week to 10 days before the announcement was made."

The decision was preceded by several months of ongoing discussions and was approved by the federation's executive committee and board, English said.

Among concerns expressed by school leaders was the maintenance of financial assistance for supplementary schools, English said. He told The CJN that funding for supplementary schools and special needs education would

Continued on page 6

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Professor Erich Gruen
Wood Professor Emeritus, Department of History,
University of California Berkeley
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8 pm
Room 140 | University College | 15 King's College Circle

MENACHOVSKY MEMORIAL LECTURE
Absolut Tchotchke: The Material Culture of Yiddish
Professor Jeffrey Shandler
Department of Jewish Studies, Rutgers University
Thursday April 2
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Room 1220
Bahen Centre for Information Technology | 40 St. George St.

SHOSHANA SHIER MEMORIAL LECTURES
Three Moments in the History of Jewish-Christian Dialogue and their Meaning for our Contemporary World
Professor David Ruderman
Joseph Meyerhoff Professor of Jewish History
Director of the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies,
University of Pennsylvania
Thursday March 26 Jews, Christians, the study of Kabbalah in Renaissance Italy in the late 15th Century
Monday March 30 Between Judaism, Christianity and Islam: The Mystical Messiah Shabbatai Zevi in the 17th Century
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Canadians, community, education

From the editor's desk...

Last week in this space I wrote about the annual assessment by the Jerusalem-based Jewish People's Policy Planning Institute (JPPPI) of the state of the worldwide Jewish community.

As our readers know, an ongoing worry of the scholars at the institute has been over the quality of Jewish education.

They do not worry less this year. "The quality of Jewish education – in Israel and abroad – is of growing concern to those who worry that ignorance about basic history, culture, and tradition has a corrosive effect on Jewish identity and, ultimately, threatens the survival of the Jewish People… Our policy recommendation… is for Jewish leadership worldwide to devote resources toward educational research, evaluation, international exchange and institutional innovation."

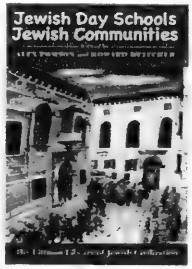
On the subject of Jewish education, it can be said that Canadian educators and lay people have been among the most active in the world. Given the number of Jews in Canada, this is not merely an expression of narrow parochial pride, but rather an important observation about how small numbers can do large things.

Some five years ago, The CJN wrote about the distinguished work Visions of Jewish Education (Cambridge University Press). One of the three co-editors was the Canadian-Israeli, Daniel Marom. Marom is the director of the Visions of Jewish Education Project of the Mandel Foundation in Jerusalem and a senior researcher there. He has published numerous books, articles and curricula in the area of Jewish and Zionist education in Israel and America.

More recently, and much closer to home, The CJN wrote about the Lola Stein Institute. Founded in 2003, the joint initiative of extraordinary lay leaders and professional educators in Toronto, the institute sprang from a desire to develop and enshrine the best of the integrative approaches and experiences at the Toronto Heschel School. The institute develops curricula and teacher training guides and publishes other educational texts that are suitable for schools across denominational divides.

Indeed, schools and teachers from other jurisdictions are beginning to take note of the institute's materials and its innovative ideas. The institute has already won wide praise from academic and educational institutions across North America.

And most recently, just weeks ago, a new publication about Jewish education has appeared that deserves the attention, as the JPPPI writers would say, of Jewish leadership. And once again, Canadians figure prominently. Jewish Day Schools, Jewish Communities: A Reconsideration is edited by Alex Pomson and Howard Deitcher (Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2009).



Pomson is a senior lecturer at the Melton Centre for Jewish education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Though not a Canadian, before his aliyah Pomson was the Koschitzky family chair of Jewish teacher education at York University in Toronto, where he co-ordinated the Jewish teacher education program. Deitcher, a former Montrealer, is the director of the Melton Centre and a senior lecturer at the school of education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Both are recognized scholars in the field. When they speak on the subject, people usually listen. When they write, people usually read.

The book is a compilation of some of the papers delivered at an international conference they convened in 2006 that explored the "community-building potential in Jewish day schools for students, their families and societies." It contains 21 essays by educators around the world – scholars, thinkers and administrators – that touch upon myriad, discrete aspects of the community-school relationship. In truth, the collection is geared more to the professional than the lay individual, for the essays are thick files of uncondensed observations and conclusions.

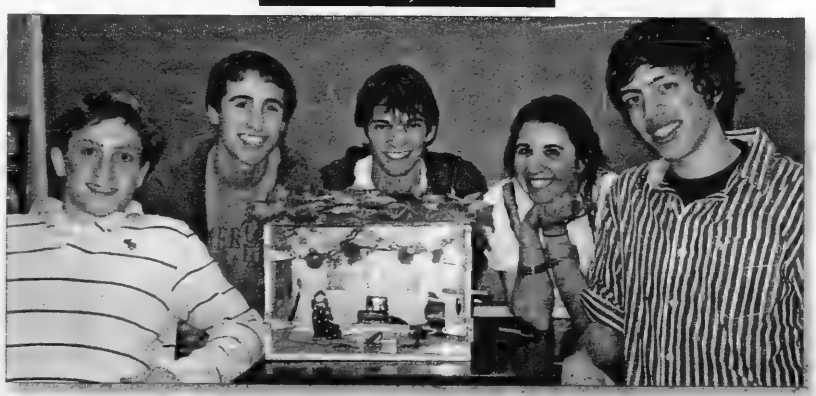
But Pomson states very plainly why he believes the community-day school connection must be studied: "The constituent components of community ultimately provide the raison d'être for Jewish day school education. Without community… the Jewish day school has no meaning or purpose." Of course, he also delves into the multiple aspects that comprise the notion of "community."

Like the book Visions of Education, the ongoing pedagogical works of the Lola Stein Institute and undoubtedly many other valuable works dedicated to the enhancement of Jewish education, the Pomson-Deitcher work is potentially an important instrument in the hands of our community leaders to strengthen the constantly strained sinews holding tight the education of our children.

Pomson and Deitcher state categorically that "components of community unite the schools." If their conclusions are correct, the innumerable ties and pathways interconnecting community and schools must be intensified and reinforced.

* * *

We note with profound loss and sadness the deaths last week of four more Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan: Warrant Officer Dennis Raymond Brown, Cpl. Dany Fortin, Cpl. Kenneth O'Quinn and Trooper Marc Diab. To their family and friends we convey our condolences. But we note, too, that the entire nation mourns. Since 2002, 112 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have died in the Afghanistan mission. — ***MBD***



JEWISH PHYSICS: Winners of Weizmann Science Canada's Shalheveth Freier Physics Tournament, held last month at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's southern campus, show their winning entry, a safe in the form of a sukkah, with the Cohen family locked inside. From left are Noah Rosenstock, Jeremy Chad, Ryan Fisch, Karen Arane and Ben Deverett. Members of the winning team and their counterparts in Montreal will head to Israel this month to compete in the annual physics tournament at the Weizmann Institute of Science.

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Some educators 'concerned' by Mercaz restructuring

Continued from page 3

be maintained and "hopefully" increased in the upcoming 2009-2010 fiscal year beginning July 1, depending on the amount of revenue raised in this year's UJA campaign.

He said the federation is confident that it will reach or come very close to last year's total of $66 million. As of last week, "close to $62 million" had been raised, English said.

For the 2008-2009 fiscal year, an extra $180,000 was budgeted for Jewish education, and the federation is "going to provide another $320,000" in the coming year, he said.

The money is already budgeted, and is "coming from donor revenue available to UJA Federation," English added.

When asked to be more specific, he answered, "I can't say it's coming from one particular source. It's a very complex process. Increases are achieved through cutting in many other ways… One of the ways is not rehiring when people leave voluntarily. We've done some internal cost cutting when it comes to seemingly small things like long distance calls and paper supplies and photocopies. We've instituted efficiencies. We're looking at every area of our operation."

According to last week's news release, a substantial sum has been "set aside, in reserve, for Jewish education, depending on campaign revenue."

"Substantial," in this context, means "over $1 million," English said. "It will be applied on a case-by-case basis for worthy programs and services that the schools in conjunction with us want to undertake."

According to the news release, federation "will be embarking on a renewed partnership with community day schools by enhancing their capacity to provide direct education services, rather than receiving services supplied by the Mercaz."

For example, English explained, "it is the schools in consultation with UJA Federation that will determine that they want to continue the Rikudiya [annual dance festival] and Zimriya [annual song festival], and together we will determine how that will be provided. One school could take the lead in providing a program or service to the community, or it could be outsourced, for example, to the faculty of Jewish studies at York [University] or the University of Toronto. The principle is the schools themselves, in partnership with us, will be supplying direct educational services to the community that were supplied for them by Mercaz."

Commenting in the news release on the change, UJA Federation president David Koschitzky said the new approach "demonstrates confidence in Toronto's excellent day schools.

"Our modern, dynamic educators have reached the point where they do not need us to deliver services. Instead, capacity-building is one of their most significant requirements."

The "new Mercaz" will likely focus on "administration of tuition subsidies, educational consultation at the schools, and liaison with the schools in a capacity-building forum," English said

The model is similar to the one the federation uses for its social service agencies, he added.

He said the changes at the Mercaz constitute "a bold, progressive move that will significantly benefit the community by redirecting money from overhead cost to direct financial support. It will be directed to the education system and not to a department that is overseeing an education system.

"Our commitment to Jewish education is genuine and it's deep, and it's ongoing."

Shana Harris, head of school at Bialik Hebrew Day School, said she was "concerned, because it's not clear to me what the new model will be and what the impact will be" on day and supplementary schools.

Many of the services that the Mercaz has coordinated and provided in the past are "critical," she said, citing as one example its Board of Licence that certified Jewish studies teachers.

As well, Harris said, the Midrasha L'Morim ran courses for all teachers in pedagogy and programming, and the Mercaz worked with York University to provide special education qualifications, which was especially significant for Jewish studies teachers.

English told The CJN there will continue to be a Board of Licence and there will be a Midrasha.

Taking on new responsibilities will "certainly… require extra staff or time" for the schools, Harris said. "Schools are [already] stretched in providing professional development and finding time to do all the programs we want to do internally."

Martin Lockshin, a York University professor and a co-founder of its Jewish teacher education program with Michael Brown and Syd Eisen, also said he was "very concerned.

"I think that something real was accomplished by having a strong central authority for Jewish education here in town." He disagreed with Koschitzky's assessment that educators no longer need service delivery from the Mercaz.

Lockshin said he thinks that "more than skeleton operations are necessary." He noted the importance of the Mercaz annual professional development day, its pedagogic library and film library that's used by teachers throughout the Jewish school system, and its mentoring services for teachers.

While mentoring can take place at individual schools, he said, he noted that new teachers may be reluctant to let their own principal know that they don't know how to do something.

The Mercaz has been "a safe place to go," Lockshin said. "I'm worried that's going to be lost."

In some ways, the Mercaz has been "even more crucial" for supplementary school teachers, he added.

Mark Smiley, director of education at Associated Hebrew Schools, said he believes that all the Jewish schools are "nervous that this will negatively impact on our ability to do high-level professional development without incurring significant additional cost to our professional development budget lines."

Associated was involved in two high-level professional development projects with the Mercaz that Smiley said he hoped would continue. One, held in conjunction with United Synagogue Day School and Bialik, related to making the school more child-centred, and the other involved Judaic studies teachers at Associated's middle school, he said.

"I think that outgoing leadership of the Mercaz were successful in – almost across the board – trying to raise standards and make the schools focus more on quality, delivering child-centredness and professionalism," Smiley said.

"I am hopeful that the reorganization of the Mercaz will leave in place a strategic forum for the planning for Jewish education, and while I believe there is an improvement in school-based leadership and excellence, most principals will agree that having outside support is essential for maintaining quality in the system."

Syd Eisen – a York University professor emeritus who founded the school's Centre for Jewish Studies and its Jewish teacher education program, and who is also a life member of the boards of both TanenbaumCHAT and Associated – said that, based on the minimal information he had, he was "delighted" to hear about an increase in tuition subsidies and hoped there would be enough funding to include some of the smaller schools.

However, he added that he was "concerned about what looks like the disintegration of the central body of professionals and handing off responsibilities to the schools.

"The schools have their job, which is to educate students. The central body's job is [to take an] overall view of quality, bringing in new things, running system-wide programs…. You need a body of professionals to do those things."

Frank Samuels, general studies principal at Yeshivat Or Chaim and Ulpanat Orot and chair of the Association of Principals of Jewish Day Schools of Toronto, said that the Mercaz's services were geared more to elementary schools than high schools like his own.

He said he is "very excited about the possibility of working with Mercaz as a service provider as we create our own professional development," but he added that he doesn't have "nearly enough time, given the demands of my own school.

"I know how difficult it is to embrace change, but I think that we're all going to be stronger as a result of this," Samuels said. "I say that with a really sad heart for the people who are no longer working."

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ORCA

JEWISH EDUCATION SERVICES
AN OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

Dear Jewish Community Member:

We are writing to tell you about an important change in services provided by UJA Federation to our funded Jewish schools. It is an approach that will substantially reduce overhead and increase our financial support. It is also an initiative that is unrelated to currently poor economic conditions, for which discussions began before the current economic downturn.

Here are the key changes:

- **Enhancing Financial Support for Jewish Education** - UJA Federation's total formal Jewish education commitment is already over $14 million. Now, we will be increasing tuition subsidies by $500,000 over the next year and a half, in addition to an extra $2 million in direct assistance for Jewish schools provided last year, through the Julia & Henry Koschitzky Fund and matching allocations.
- **Supporting Supplementary & Special Needs Education** - We will be maintaining and, hopefully, enhancing existing funding for special needs and supplementary education.
- **A New Fund for Other Education Projects** - We will be setting aside a substantial sum of money in reserve for Jewish education initiatives, depending on campaign revenue.
- **Reducing Education Overhead Costs** - The Mercaz, UJA Federation's education department, will be restructured with a streamlined professional staff, supplemented by other UJA Federation professionals when required. All staff members who will no longer be part of the new Mercaz are being treated generously and sensitively. By reducing overhead costs, we can enhance financial support for Jewish education to which we are deeply committed.
- **Strengthening Our Day Schools** - We will be strengthening the capacity of our affiliated day schools to provide direct education services, rather than receiving services supplied by the Mercaz. This philosophy, known as capacity building, meets the needs of contemporary, dynamic day school administrators and educators, who no longer require a central agency to supply services for them.
- **Encouraging Innovative Educational Programs** - We are going to work with all our affiliated schools in a spirit of true partnership to develop a list of required educational services and programs for the community, and then determine the best way to provide them. The process will be creative, collaborative, responsible and flexible, with the community's needs taking precedence.

These changes represent an exciting, innovative development. It will solidify Toronto's reputation as a world leader in Jewish education and expand our profound commitment to this critical cause, thanks to the support and generosity of our community.

We welcome your questions and suggestions. Please e-mail info@ujafed.org.

David Koschitzky
Chair of the Board
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Ted Sokolsky
President & CEO
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

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Gaza and surreal theatre

Last Monday, in the elaborate elegance and stunning luxury of the finest conference room in Egypt's resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh, the representatives of some 80 countries and international organizations met to discuss and pledge funds for the rebuilding of Gaza.

The Palestinian Authority had hoped to raise $2.78 billion (US). By the end of the day, however, they had received promises of donations totalling $5.2 billion. According to Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, $4.48 billion of that total represented new pledges. The remainder comprised previous pledges that donors recommitted to giving. He described the figure as being "beyond our expectations."

Canada contributed $4 million.

In announcing the Canadian contribution, Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon said: "We stand firmly behind the direction set by President Mahmoud Abbas toward a well-governed, democratic and prosperous Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace with Israel. *We believe just as firmly that it is not in the Palestinian people's interest for terrorist organizations such as Hamas to launch rocket attacks on Israeli civilians.*" (Our emphasis)

There, in pointed, elegant understatement, Cannon pointed to the very large white-black-green-and-red elephant not sitting in the luxurious conference room.

Gaza is ruled by a regime that has never shown any interest in building up or developing Gaza. It prefers to focus its energies on a policy of genocide toward its Jewish neighbour. Indeed, in the past, it has focused a great deal of energy on killing Fatah members as well.

Thus, the obvious question begs to be asked: to whom in Gaza are the billions of reconstruction funds to be given? Who will administer, manage and oversee the rebuilding of Gaza?

Two days before the statesmen and NGO officials gathered at the luxurious resort, a Qassam rocket slammed into a school in Ashkelon. The day before the meeting, three Qassam rockets struck southern Israel, one sparking a fire in Sderot. Last Thursday a Grad rocket struck a synagogue in Netivot. More rockets fell on the weekend. Since the mutually agreed upon cessation of hostilities in Gaza on Jan. 18, Palestinian terrorists have fired some 130 rockets and mortar shells into southern Israel. They show a particular penchant for targeting schools, nurseries and houses of worship.

The day after the conference, Israel's ambassador to the UN, Gabriela Shalev, filed a complaint with the Security Council concerning the unceasing rocket attacks by Hamas. "In response to these ongoing attacks… the government of Israel will continue to safeguard the security of its citizens and will ensure that the situation in southern Israel does not return to the status quo ante of December 2008. Israel will… respond accordingly to attacks against its citizens."

The combined posing for the cameras, the pledging of money and the lofty posturing at Sharm el Sheikh last week, in truth, was akin to an absurd play. If Hamas' rule does not end in Gaza, neither will the rocket fire into Israel. And then, there will be a need for even more reconstruction funds to be pledged by the players in the surrealist Gaza theatre.

25 years ago in The CJN

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir criticized Egypt for not returning its ambassador, who had been recalled during the 1982 Lebanon War, describing it as being against the spirit of the peace treaty between the two countries. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, however, said he had no intention of cancelling the treaty.

Dry Bones
MONEY FOR GAZA?!!
GIVING MONEY TO HAMAS-CONTROLLED GAZA . . .
AND EXPECTING THAT IT WON'T BE USED FOR TERRORISM . . .
BE GOOD NOW!
IS LIKE GIVING MONEY TO A HERON ADDICT . . .
AND EXPECTING THAT IT WON'T BE USED FOR DRUGS.
BE GOOD NOW!

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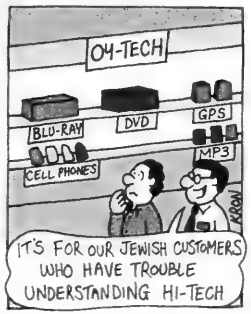
CUPE resolution protested in Windsor

The Jewish Defence League bused 50 of us to Windsor, Ont., from Toronto on Feb. 23 to protest as the Canadian Union of Public Employees Ontario voted on a resolution to boycott Israeli academic institutions. As we stood outside in front of the Windsor Hilton Hotel, inside, delegates representing the union's Ontario university workers deliberated and voted on the resolution.

We were joined by Windsor Jews and Christians, and we numbered over 100 strong as we came face to face with angry Palestinian supporters on the street outside the hotel. Women, men and children from the Windsor Arab community held up hand-lettered signs denouncing Israel and waved Palestinian and Hezbollah flags. Some of us waved Canadian and Israeli flags, while others held up signs that read "No to CUPE's attacks on Academic Freedom" or "Vote No to Anti-Israel Resolutions."



At one point, Arab counter-protesters, without provocation, crossed over toward us, yelling, "Death to Israel." The Windsor police intervened by blasting their patrol car sirens and driving their cruisers between us and them. But the most striking image for me was the sight of CUPE Ontario president Sid Ryan, who proposed the boycott of Israeli academics, as he made his way toward the string of Hezbollah flags and posters of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. As we watched in disbelief, Ryan shook hands with many of the Arab counter-protesters and embraced them.

The mood was sombre as we got word that the delegates voted in favour of the boycott of Israeli universities. The passing of this discriminatory resolution sets a dangerous Canadian precedent by its singling out a single country.

Robin Shugar
Toronto

* * *

Al-Jazeera's bias is subtle

Paul Michaels is correct to question the objectivity of Al-Jazeera English ("'Objective' reporting and Al-Jazeera," CJN, Feb. 26). Al-Jazeera English's bias is extremely subtle and easy to miss. It is manifested not so much in whom it interviews – given that it goes through the motions of interviewing Israeli government spokespeople – but in how it packages the interviews it delivers.

For example, an interview with Hillel Neuer of UN Watch permitted Neuer to make his points that planning for the upcoming "Durban II," the followup to the UN World Conference Against Racism conference of 2001, targets Israel exclusively while omitting mention of the human rights abuses of notorious offenders such as Sudan and China. But as Neuer spoke, Al-Jazeera projected videos of an anti-Zionist demonstration by completely unrepresentative Jews – the Neturei Karta – and of suffering Palestinian refugees, not of the Sudanese refugees to whom Neuer was referring. This is just one example of the subliminal message conveyed by this ultra-slick network.

What the CRTC needs to see is the hidden agenda of this splendidly packaged propaganda vehicle, staffed by attractive, highly paid, western-trained journalists. Like the propaganda films Leni Riefenstahl made for the Nazis, Al-Jazeera English's broadcasts are very professional, and they play well in the West's living rooms. Its journalists dress like us and speak with cultivated British accents, its graphics are top-notch, but inside the pretty package is a subtle and insidious anti-Israeli and anti-American message that is all the more dangerous because it is so hard to pin down. It is our job to drive this point home to the CRTC.

Marjorie Gann
Toronto

* * *

Jewish schools cast in bad light

A recent article in the general media featured a story that cast two local Jewish schools in a particularly bad light by highlighting the fact that they collectively owe more than $1 million in rental arrears to the Toronto District School Board. I have no doubt that these schools owe the outstanding lease payments to the board, but a careful examination of the underlying reasons for the mounting debt is surely warranted before aspersions are cast on them. These two Jewish schools (among several others) need to rent these otherwise vacant TDSB properties at great expense to their tax-paying parents because religious schools that are not of the Roman Catholic persuasion presently receive no government funding. Any anger, therefore, should be directed to the present inequity inherent in the education funding system and not at the schools whose parents have chosen a different religious path than the only one presently sanctioned by the Ontario government.

Joseph Y. Adler
Toronto

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Netanyahu faces moment of truth

By LESLIE SUSSER
JTA

Pressed to take a firm stand on the two-state solution, Benjamin Netanyahu's moment of truth may have come sooner than he wanted.

Despite strong international and domestic pressure, the Likud leader, who is trying to form a governing coalition, is refusing to come out in support of the idea of two states for two peoples, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace.

Ever since President George W. Bush outlined his vision of two states in June 2002, the two-state solution has been consensus international policy and the basis for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Netanyahu's refusal to reaffirm Israel's commitment to the two-state principle leaves him out of step with the rest of the international community. It also is likely to cost him the chance of forming a more moderate coalition.

Already the main international players are ratcheting up pressure on Netanyahu to back the two-state idea.

In an interview in advance of her trip to the Middle East last week, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton told Voice of America radio on Feb. 27 that Washington would continue working "to create an independent, viable Palestinian state in both the West Bank and Gaza."

A few days earlier, European Union (EU) foreign ministers meeting in Brussels insisted that the two-state solution was "the only option."

"We hope that the new Israeli government will honour the obligations taken by Israel under the 'road map' [peace plan] and at Annapolis, and refrain from measures rendering a two-state solution impossible," said an official statement from the Czech EU presidency.

In Israel, Kadima party leader Tzipi Livni has made acceptance of the two-state idea a condition for joining Netanyahu's coalition.

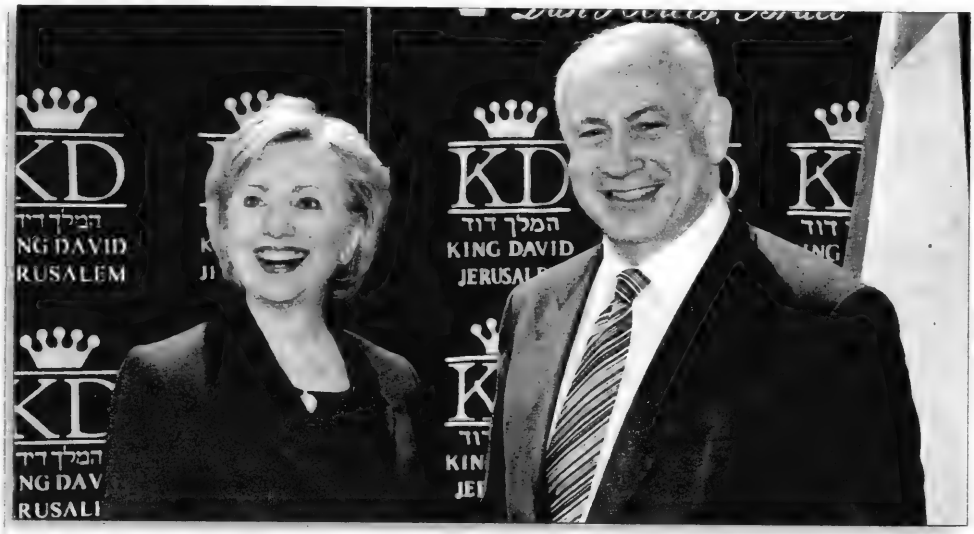
"Two states is not an empty slogan," she said. "It's the only way Israel can remain Jewish and fight terror."

Even though he very much wants to see Kadima in his government, Netanyahu has made only vague promises to continue peace talks. In messages to world leaders, he has pledged to honour commitments by previous Israeli governments, but has omitted any explicit references to Palestinian statehood.

Netanyahu has also been very careful in statements to the media. Asked specifically about the two-state solution in an interview with the Washington Post, he replied guardedly, "Substantively, I think there is broad agreement inside Israel and outside that the Palestinians should have the ability to govern their lives, but not to threaten ours."

In other words, yes to self-government, but not necessarily to statehood.

The obvious reason Netanyahu is treading so carefully is that he doesn't want to alienate his hard-line potential coalition partners before he has even a narrow, right-wing government in place.



Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu met with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton last week in Jerusalem. Clinton pledged to press hard for Palestinian statehood, putting Washington on a possible collision course with Netanyahu.
[Matty Stern/U.S. Embassy TLV Flash90 photo]

But his opposition to Palestinian statehood goes much deeper. In fact, Netanyahu is adopting very much the same position he did during his first term as prime minister, from 1996 to 1999. He argued then that in any agreement with Israel, the Palestinian entity would be so severely restricted that it would be less than a fully independent state. It would not be allowed to have control over its airspace, control border crossing points, raise an army or enter into military pacts with foreign powers.

Netanyahu still holds these positions, which he says are essential for Israel's security. Therefore, he will not to commit to full Palestinian statehood – a concept he fears might erode some or most of these restrictions.

> *'I think there is broad agreement inside Israel and outside that the Palestinians should have the ability to govern their lives, but not to threaten ours'*

Please see According to Reports on page 22.

He also insists that for security reasons, Israel must retain nearly 50 per cent of the West Bank, including the Jordan Valley. This, too, runs counter to the international consensus notion of a "viable and contiguous" Palestinian state.

While all other Israeli prime ministers have dramatically changed their views on Palestinian statehood in the decade since Netanyahu was last prime minister, Netanyahu appears to remain unwavering in his opposition to the idea.

In early 2002, when then-prime minister Ariel Sharon, aware of Bush's impending "two-state vision" speech, announced his tentative acceptance of the two-state idea, Netanyahu hurriedly convened the Likud central committee to challenge Sharon. In the ensuing ballot, Sharon was humiliated. His proposal to defer the vote on a Netanyahu-backed resolution that "no Palestinian state will be established west of the Jordan" was defeated 696 to 465. As Sharon left the podium to loud booing, the Netanyahu measure was carried by a nearly unanimous show of hands.

The vote, however, had no impact. Sharon adopted the two-state solution, and his successor, Ehud Olmert, declared that without it Israel "was finished."

Ironically, at the time of the 2002 Likud ballot, Netanyahu joined forces with the hawkish Moshe Feiglin, whose far-right Jewish leadership movement advocates transfer of Israeli Arab citizens out of Israel. But in this year's election, Netanyahu pushed Feiglin down the party slate in a bid to give Likud a more moderate image.

Some Netanyahu watchers suggest that his position on Palestinian statehood may only be tactical, designed to earn Israel a better deal at the bazaar-like Middle East bargaining table. In Netanyahu's view, they say, statehood should come only at the end of a negotiating process, after being used as a lever to acquire concessions from the Palestinians, and not conceded up front as Sharon, Olmert and Livni have all done.

But it is almost certainly too late for such a gambit. Holding back on Palestinian statehood when it has been conceded by previous Israeli governments is unlikely to fly in an international climate where the two-state goal has long been taken for granted.

The stance could well bring Netanyahu into conflict with the United States and the European Union. Worse, it could lead to renewed confrontation with the Palestinians, with Israel in the untenable position of putting down a Palestinian uprising for a two-state solution Israel itself had previously accepted.

The same is true of Netanyahu's attempt to turn back the clock on the issue of West Bank territory. It's hard to see how Netanyahu could offer the Palestinians only 50 per cent of the West Bank when Olmert, Livni and Labor's Ehud Barak all have offered well over 90 per cent, with land swaps for whatever areas Israel annexes. This was also the U.S. position expressed in the December 2000 parameters set down by then-president Bill Clinton.

It is partly because he realizes the implications of his hard-line positions that Netanyahu so desperately wants Livni and/or Barak in his government.

If he doesn't back the two-state solution, they could serve as a fig leaf for his government. If he does, they could provide both the excuse he gives the right for making such a major concession and the political support to see them through.

First, however, Netanyahu would have to say the magic words and back two states for two peoples.

If he does, he might lose the hawks, though even Yisrael Beiteinu's Avigdor Lieberman supports a two-state solution. If he doesn't, he almost certainly will lose the doves.

Netanyahu is trapped, and in this moment of truth, there is nowhere for him to hide.

Opinions

Adding to our agenda

Rabbi Yitz Greenberg once declared that we can't afford to let our enemies set our agenda. They might add to it, but not control it. What do I mean?

Norma Baumel Joseph in Montreal

As anti-Israel activity on campuses across the country increase, we must act. We must support our students and communities with enough resources to combat this virulent form of anti-Semitism. (Don't tell me its not anti-Semitism when they shout "Death to the Jews!")

Additionally, as we involve ourselves maximally in the defence of Israel, there are many demands on our resources at home. The economy has taxed us to the limit. Our agencies and institutions need our help more now than ever before, but we have less access to funds.

Yet while we engage in these crises, we cannot forget our "ordinary" problems, many of which are exacerbated during times of emergency. Domestic violence traditionally increases as the economy goes south. Some men lose their jobs and their self-possession at the same time, it seems. Our task is to attend to the crisis at hand while we continue to work on the long list of Jewish communal needs. And we need help with issues such as Jewish domestic violence. It exists in our communities – across all our economic, religious and ethnic boundaries – and it's serious.

In Canada, we have some help, such as alternative short-term emergency housing for abused Jewish women and their children set up by Jewish Women International, as well as one remarkable kosher shelter and intake centre, Auberge Shalom in Montreal, and resources in other cities.

But it's not enough. Not nearly.

What can we do?

Primarily, we need to acknowledge the problem exists. Then we should listen to those suffering. I remember hearing one doctor talk of her experience of physical abuse. After years of hiding the scars, it was her mother-in-law (!) who helped her face the facts and get out. We need that kind of courage. We need sermons, columns and education. We can't turn away from domestic abuse of any kind.

For the past three years, friends and I have attended a JWI International conference on Jewish domestic abuse. Our particular interest has always been our uniquely Jewish form of divorce (*get*) abuse. But we learned about all other kinds. The fourth conference will be held next month in Virginia. Visit www.jwi.org to find out more. Try to go, or support someone who wants to go. Talk to your local group and see what you can do to help. Get involved.

Remember: it's not their shame. It's ours.

We need to embrace historical research

History – and Jewish history in particular – can be more than an academic exercise. It can be a tool for propaganda (e.g., the book Stalinist Russia), a theological minefield (Quest for the Historical Jesus) or even a blood sport.

Jean M. Gerber in Vancouver

Prof. Stanley Kutler, my undergraduate mentor, wrote the seminal book about former U.S. president Richard Nixon. Yet recently, a revisionist history of Nixon has begun to take shape among those who want to rehabilitate his reputation. To this end, they've published attacks on Kutler's analysis, leading to a battle of words in the media and on academic blogs. It ended with the New York Times retreating from its own articles by acknowledging the flimsy argument of the revisionists. That's history as a blood sport.

History as propaganda we learned from the manipulation of historical truths during the dark days of Stalin's U.S.S.R. To change the future, the Soviets changed the past. Other examples could be Austria's "Hitler made us do it" argument or Poland recreating Auschwitz as a Catholic shrine.

We like to call ourselves a historical people, but we often use history as a tool to advance a particular political, or even theological, agenda. Case in point: the 1984 book From Time Immemorial, a volume that puts the Jews in their land from, well, time immemorial, a position guaranteed to be used in ways that advance a particular political agenda.

We are all familiar with the politician's appeal to historical circumstance (always favourable to his point of view) that in turn dictates a particular course of action. This tendency is nowhere more visible than in Israel, where history can be used as a tool to beat up on your opponent.

Many years ago, a young history professor, Yeshiyahu Gafni of Hebrew University, was my teacher in Jerusalem. An Orthodox Jew, Gafni is a brilliant, stimulating and perhaps sometimes controversial history teacher whose specialty is the talmudic period. Recently, Gafni was a scholar in residence in Vancouver and I had a chance to once again listen to his perceptive analysis of Jewish historiography.

He argues that historians can extract valuable historical information from the Talmud, and that we can examine Jewish history from this perspective without challenging the halachic framework of Rabbinic Judaism. Indeed, he insists upon it.

In one unforgettable class in Jerusalem, we were studying the period of Yavneh, using the text "Give me Yavneh and her wise men" ("Ten li Yavneh v'hachameha"). This, it's reported in the Mishnah, was the request made by Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai to the invading Romans in order that the scholarship of the Pharisees-cum-rabbis could continue.

Now Yavneh at the time was a wholly Hellenized city with – wait for it – no wise men of the Israelite persuasion. According to Gafni, using this and other texts, we can learn about the historical development of Rabbinic Judaism, as well as the historical period in which that development took place.

Pursuing this line of inquiry, we learned that in addition to the many layers of Halachah and aggadah that make up the Mishnah, historical context is critical to a full understanding of the text and the historical period.

Can we reinterpret the story of Yavneh and her mythical wise men without losing its essence? Gafni argues that we can extract historical information from the Talmud, indeed that this approach is critical to a true understanding of contemporary Rabbinic Judaism.

As Yosef Yerushalmi observes in his book Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory, professional Jewish historians are relatively new. He points out that while "memory of the past was always a central component of Jewish experience, the historian was not its primary custodian." Jewish historians such as Gafni and Yerushalmi – quite different in viewpoint, to be sure – are staking out new territory.

We shouldn't rely on a simplistic view of Jewish history. We need to accept historical research and be ready to re-examine how we use, and abuse, our own history. That won't make us bad Jews. It will make us even more committed, as Gafni is, to seeking out what really happened, as best we can, and treating our texts as guides.

Slur on interfaith harmony

Interfaith initiatives are important to ensure that all major faith communities not become insular and isolated from the broader community that we all share.

Consider, for example, the work of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action, which offers programs, seminars, educational displays and public gatherings that promote respect, friendship and harmony among people of all faiths.

Gerald L. Gall in Edmonton

In addition, many faith groups in Edmonton sponsor their own programs that encourage understanding and a sharing of both unique and common experiences. In mid-March, the Ahymadiyya Muslim Women's Association of Edmonton is holding its annual interfaith symposium, featuring presentations by representatives of the local Jewish, Sikh, Christian and Islamic communities.

As vital and encouraging as these interfaith contacts are, we still cannot lose sight of the fact that there are prominent members of some faith communities who are intolerant, and even hateful, of others.

We are unfortunately reminded of this by the recent controversy concerning Catholic Bishop Richard Williamson, who headed a Buenos Aires seminary and who held distorted, anti-Semitic views. In a widely publicized interview on Swedish television, Bishop Williamson essentially denied the Holocaust or, at least, denied the extent of the horrors visited upon European Jewry. He claimed that 200,000 or 300,000 Jews were murdered and not six million, and he denied that any Jews were gassed.

The bishop was excommunicated by the Church, not because of his anti-Semitic denials, but because of the manner of his consecration as a bishop. The Vatican subsequently lifted his excommunication.

As a result of his Holocaust denials, the bishop was removed from the seminary in Argentina and was expelled to his native England by the Argentine government. Bishop Williamson subsequently apologized, referring to the harm and hurt his remarks caused, but did not in any way retract his Holocaust denial. This was unsatisfactory to the Vatican.

On his return to England, it was learned that Bishop Williamson had contacted and sought advice from David Irving, the disgraced British anti-Semitic and Holocaust-denying historian.

When Bishop Williamson was expelled from Argentina, the government announced that his hateful remarks had "deeply shocked Argentine society, the Jewish people and all of humanity."

This obviously reflects the new Argentina, a nation with a large, vibrant, and healthy Jewish community of more than 200,000. But it wasn't that long ago, in 1994, when the Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires was bombed, killing 85 people and injuring more than 300. The subsequent investigation and prosecutions were widely criticized. Over the years, Iran and Hezbollah were implicated in the bombing.

However, the bombing reflects a long tradition of anti-Jewish sentiment in that country. This dates back to the period after World War II when Argentina was considered a safe haven for many Nazis fleeing prosecution, including probably the most infamous of all, Adolf Eichmann.

To this day, South America has experienced pockets of anti-Jewish sentiment. Currently, Venezuelan Jews are feeling the pressure of a government led by President Hugo Chavez. According to the U.S. Anti-Defamation League, a rise in anti-Semitism has been "fostered in large part by Chavez's own rhetoric and that of his government institutions." And, at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, some of the worst anti-Semitic "literature" originated in Brazil.

On a positive note, the official statement of the Argentine government on the expulsion of Bishop Williamson included the notion that Holocaust denial deeply shocks "all of humanity." This represents a refreshing new message that will hopefully resound throughout that continent.

Perhaps the Williamson controversy represents somewhat of a failure of existing interfaith dialogue. However, as Canadian Jewish Congress Co-president Rabbi Reuven Bulka recently wrote in the Ottawa Citizen, "Jew and non-Jew alike rejected [Bishop] Williamson and his views… there has been great progress in Christian-Jewish understanding to the point that there is profound amity between the two religions. The Williamson affair proved that this profound amity is simultaneously unshakable."

Clearly, such dialogue must continue. Interfaith co-operation fosters mutual respect and understanding among all faith communities and creates an atmosphere in which the aberrant voice of a Bishop Williamson will not be heard.

The Kirshner File

Schiff was first female publisher in New York

Dorothy (Dolly) Schiff, the scion of an assimilated German Jewish American family of conservative leanings, has the distinction of having been the first female publisher of a major New York daily newspaper. A socialite whose parents were listed in the snobbish Social Register and a liberal activist who may have been a lover of a president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, she was the proprietor of the New York Post, the oldest continuously published daily in the United States. Schiff, whose grandfather was the legendary banker Jacob Schiff, presided over the fortunes of the Post from 1939 until 1976, when she sold it to the Australian business tycoon Rupert Murdoch.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Under her direction, the Post – which was founded in 1801 and was one of Abraham Lincoln's earliest supporters – was the model of a crusading newspaper. It was the first to attack U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy, the paranoid red baiter. It supported the African-American civil rights movement. It opposed the Vietnam war. It broke the story of Richard Nixon's slush fund. It spoke up on behalf of Zionism at a time when many American Jews were dubious about Jewish statehood. It consistently lined up behind Israel in its struggle for survival and acceptance.

Schiff wanted to be taken seriously as an opinion maker and power broker, writes Marilyn Nissenson in The Lady Upstairs: Dorothy Schiff and the New York Post (St. Martin's Press), and indeed she was. In this absorbing biography, Nissenson, a journalist and seasoned reader of the Post, draws a nuanced portrait of a driven and intelligent woman who thrived in an era when women had to fight for rights taken for granted today.

She was born in Manhattan in 1903, her parents having been Mortimer and Adele Schiff, whose ancestors arrived in the United States in the 19th century. Few doors in the New York social scene were closed to Schiff, a slim, dark-haired, fair-skinned, blue-eyed debutante who often moved in circles generally off limits to Jews.

Not surprisingly, the first of her four husbands, Richard Hall, was a Christian from a fine, though impoverished, waspy family who was given to making anti-Semitic comments about Jews in general and Schiff in particular. They were married in 1923 in a Protestant ceremony at the Church of the Heavenly Rest. "There was something in it for each of them," writes Nissenson sardonically. "He got access to her money, and she got his name."

Despite her conversion to Christianity, she was an atheist and always considered herself a Jew. Yet, like some of her upper-class Jewish contemporaries, she was was not entirely comfortable in her Jewish skin, considering her Jewish heritage problematic, says Nissenson. Certainly, her brother, John, had no such problems. He married into New York's WASP establishment and raised his two children as Episcopalians.

A Democrat rather than a Republican, Schiff was drawn to the promise of Roosevelt's reformist New Deal. A social acquaintance of the president, she may well have known him in the biblical sense. When she reminisced about her relationship with him, Nissenson observes, she was coy about whether or not it had been a sexual one.

Schiff's foray into publishing occurred after her divorce and marriage to George Backer, a Jewish real estate mogul. With his encouragement, she bought the Post from a fellow Democrat, David Stern, who owned the Philadelphia Record as well. Stern and his wife convinced Schiff, whose net worth was a cool $10 million, that owning a newspaper was not just an investment but an opportunity for self-expression and a chance to become a personality in her own right.

With an average daily circulation of 250,000, the Post lagged behind rivals such as the New York Times and the World-Telegram. But the Post was blessed with an admirable editorial staff consisting of, among others, columnist Franklin Adams, financial writer Sylvia Porter, editorialist I.F. Stone and Hollywood correspondent Sidney Skolsky.

Three years after buying it, Schiff displaced her husband as president and publisher of the Post. As she discovered, it was a money pit. Having already sunk $1 million into the venture, she was forced to put up another $500,000 by the end of 1942. The losses continued to pile up after World War II, but by the 1960s, the paper was profitable, with circulation peaking at around 700,000.

Its readership being largely Jewish, the Post was pro-Zionist. As World War II wound down, Schiff told a German-language Jewish newspaper in New York that American Jews should pressure Britain to permit unlimited Jewish settlement in Palestine. "It is the land where, as my friends tell me, roses bloom in the desert and outstanding achievements have been accomplished," she said.

With Israel's declaration of independence in 1948 – Nissenson misstates the date as 1947 – the Post spared no space in giving it front-page coverage. "Stories about Israel were sometimes the only foreign news reported in the paper for days on end," she notes, adding that the speeches of Israel's representative at the United Nations, Abba Eban, were often reprinted in verbatim form. And when Israeli leaders visited the city, they were interviewed and profiled.

Dorothy (Dolly) Schiff in 1948

Schiff's fourth and final husband, Rudolf Sonneborn, a manufacturer of petroleum products, was a keen Zionist who travelled to Israel on business quite often. In 1951, prior to their marriage, she accompanied him on one of his trips and remained in Israel for two months.

Although Schiff was torn by anxiety about her Jewish identity, she was always eager to highlight successful Jews in the pages of the Post. In addition, she commissioned the sociologist Nathan Glazer to prepare a series on several ethnic and racial groups in New York, including Jews and Puerto Ricans.

Dissatisfied with the results, she dropped Glazer, who retained the rights to the material and proceeded to write the classic work, Beyond the Melting Pot, a critical and commercial success.

As a person, Schiff could be shy, remote, imperious, self-absorbed and unapproachable, notwithstanding her evaluation of herself as someone with a common touch. Nissenson elaborates: "She may have shared the ideals, interests and concerns of most of her readers and employees, but the cumulative heritage of her childhood – being undervalued by her parents while reaping the benefits of social privilege – almost guaranteed that she would fall back on an austere patrician style when she was ill at ease."

During the heyday of her reign, morale in the newsroom was high, with reporters taking pride in the perception that the Post was the best-written newspaper in town.

But as the 1960s wore on, morale plunged as reporters and editors were stymied by her parsimonious style. She would steam unused stamps off return envelopes and confront employees who used company phones for private calls. In editorial matters, she could be remarkably cheap. She refused to pay competitive salaries and tried to cut corners in the coverage of stories.

On balance, though, Schiff was a serious and fearless publisher who had noble instincts. "She was the only publisher in New York with balls," one of her editors said.

Having sold the Post for $31 million, she retired, spending her last years socializing, reading books, needlepointing and watching television.

Murdoch, the new owner, transformed the Post into a right-wing newspaper, resorting to his tried-and-tested formula of skin and scandal, which must have saddened Schiff before her death in 1989.

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Food drive needs donations, volunteers for deliveries

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Karen Fenwick and Debbie Wasserman, co-chairs of the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto section's 26th annual Passover food drive, are facing a dilemma.

They have more names on their list of recipients than last year, and their monetary donations are down.

They accept referrals from agencies, synagogues, schools, service groups and chaplaincy services, and the list includes people who are living in poverty, people with disabilities and inadequate financial resources, and recent immigrants in need.

Each food box contains many of the essentials needed for the seder and the week of Passover, including matzah and matzah meal, as well as Passover wine or grape juice, candles, soup and a side dish, gefilte fish and canned fruit.

"People are afraid to donate money, because they're worried about the economic situation, and food donations are down because they're shopping less. They don't know what's coming," Wasserman said.

The pair, along with their committee, buys 90 per cent of the food that gets delivered to recipients, and although they are able to purchase food at wholesale prices, their costs have risen 35 per cent over last year, because food prices are higher, Fenwick said.

"We've had to give agencies a quota on the number of recipients on their list. Our project runs on donations – what we get is what we spend," she said. "If we don't get enough, we'll have to reduce the content of the boxes. We'll have to decide what people need the most."

Karen Fenwick

Debbie Wasserman

On a positive note, people from outside the community are stepping up to help.

"A non-Jewish woman from Muskoka read about our organization in a newspaper and called us with a donation," Wasserman said.

"And a school in Scarborough that runs a food program for the hungry is collecting money for the drive. One of our mandates is to teach people about poverty, so we're [happy] to see that we've reached beyond our community."

Fenwick and Wasserman are also pleased with the number of volunteers who have come forward.

"We have one volunteer who has been a recipient of the drive, and one former volunteer who is now a social work student and wanted to work one of her placements with us," Fenwick said.

She said Rabbi Yossi Sapirman of Beth Torah Congregation brings a busload of students on delivery day – which this year is March 29 – "and they load the bus with boxes to be delivered by the students."

Volunteers willing to deliver boxes for one hour on delivery day – each car should have a driver and a helper – can show up at Council House, 4700 Bathurst St. at 8:30 a.m. Dollies and carts are helpful to bring. For information, call 416-633-5100.

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13-year-old whiz is a natural in the cockpit

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Recent news about airplanes falling out of the sky is enough to turn anyone into a nervous flyer, but Michael Domb hasn't been deterred from achieving his dream of becoming a pilot.

Domb said he already has the required number of in flight hours to go solo – fly without an instructor – but he'll still have to wait a few months before he can.

Legally, you have to be 14 years old to fly by yourself with a student pilot licence, and Domb is just 13.

But by the summer, he expects to pass the test to get his student licence, which would also make him the youngest Canadian, and youngest Israeli, student pilot.

Domb, a Fieldstone Day School student who often travels to Israel to visit family, said aviation has always been part of his life.

"My dad was working for the U.S. for NASA for the Apollo missions. He's a rocket scientist. He also used to fly," Domb said, adding that his father, Uriel Domb, is president and CEO of Telespace Inc., a satellite consulting company.

He said his uncle is also a pilot who owns a small, single engine plane.

"I started flying when I was 12… We used to go up and have some fun in the air."

Domb said he started flying with an instructor last year and began going to a pilot ground school, where he learned aviation basics. After that, he was assigned to a unit and an instructor who taught him to fly.

He said it was a surprise to him and many others that flying came so naturally to him.

"Ever since I was little, I flew on computer simulators, but it came pretty quickly to me in the airplane. I did pretty well, and I progressed pretty fast," he said.

He said he's been learning to fly with Canadian Flyers, a pilot training firm, at the Markham Airport, where he learns on a Cessna 172.

"Markham has a really small runway. It is very narrow, so it makes flying different and hard. If you can learn to land there, you can land pretty much anywhere, because it's so small. And if you think about flying a plane at 130 kilometres an hour and coming to land on a seven-foot wide runway, it's pretty hard. When you have to factor in wind and snow, or rain on a slippery runway, it can get pretty complicated," Domb said.

With 15 hours of flying already under his belt – three more than the minimum requirement – Domb is counting down the days until his 14th birthday in June, when he is legally able to fly solo as a student.

He said his instructor evaluates him every time he flies and said he's ready to go it alone because he knows how to take off, fly and land.

"Part of the flight training is doing spins. You basically fly up to 6,000 feet, and then you stall the plane and it goes into a spin and you spin for a couple thousand feet and the plane is actually going pretty fast, but it only lasts for about three seconds. When you pull out, it's a lot of fun."

Although Domb enjoys the thrill of flying, he takes it very seriously, especially in light of recent plane crashes in Buffalo and Amsterdam.

"As we have recently seen with the Bombardier plane crash in Buffalo, flying can be quite dangerous. It is a lot of fun, and a great experience, but when people treat aircraft lightly, accidents happen," Domb said.

"Last year, when I worked as a flight dispatcher at Markham, people would rent airplanes and takeoff without doing any [safety] checks. Not only is this breaking the law, but it is extremely dangerous. These are aircraft, not cars."

Domb added that when he turns 16, he plans to take the written exam and flight test required to obtain a pilot's license, and then he'll be able to fly a plane on his own with passengers.

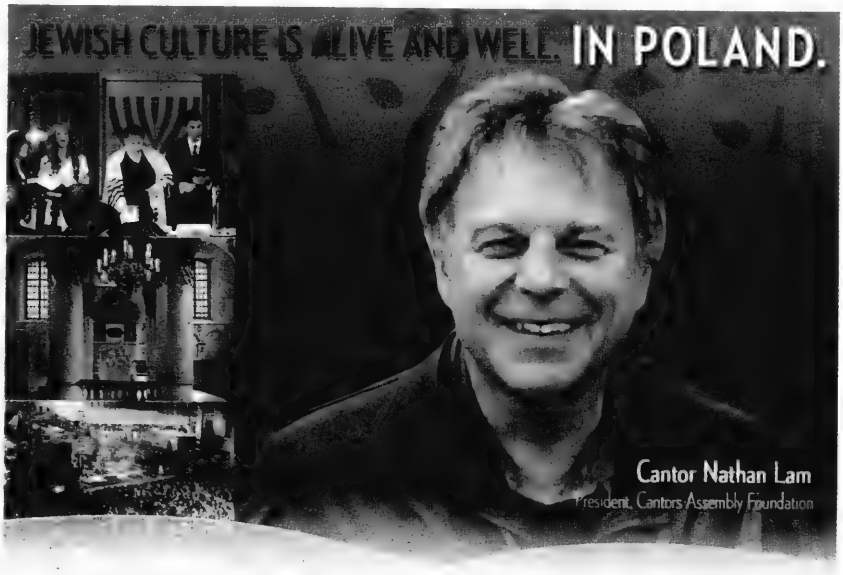
But his ambitions don't end there.

Domb said that when he turns 18, he plans to make aliyah and join the Israeli Air Force. He said part of the reason he wants to serve in Israel rather than Canada is because he feels more of a connection with the Jewish state, and he has a friend who died two years ago serving in the war in Lebanon.

But beneath it all, he simply loves to fly.

"I mean, it's complicated, and not every flight is the same – it's always different… I just love flying as a whole."

Michael Domb learning on a Cessna 172



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I have traveled to Poland many times before, and it was clear to me that a revival of Jewish life was in full swing. Each time I left, I came away thinking that I wanted to bring people back with me.

I invite you to join us to be part of a memorable experience. As a group of 100 strong, we will sing these traditional tunes in synagogues and on other sites where they were originally performed.

The overwhelming majority of American Jews can trace their roots back to Poland. I believe it is our duty to support the revival of the Polish Jewish community and to ensure we preserve and memorialize the 1,000 years of Jewish history there.

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For more information about the Taube Foundation's programs in Poland, go to TaubePhilanthropies.org

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Whether it's a bar mitzvah, bat mitzvah, "Bubbie's" birthday or a business banquet, you'll always be treated like a rock star at Hard Rock Cafe Toronto and Hard Rock Cafe at The Rogers Centre (formerly the Skydome).

With a combined 27,000-square feet, including nightclubs and streetside patios, Hard Rock Cafe Toronto and Hard Rock Cafe at The Rogers Centre offer a vast array of configurations for a wide variety of events, from five to 500 people, breakfast through late-night.

Marcelo DeOliveira, sales and marketing manager for Hard Rock Cafe: "We've hosted countless bar mitzvahs, wedding receptions, product launches and press conferences. We've put on events for all types of companies, from Deloitte & Touche and The Toronto Star, to BMG Music. Guests love Hard Rock. It's a very unique environment."

As if to make his point, DeOliveira walks a visitor past some of the priceless rock memorabilia hanging on Hard Rock Cafe Toronto's walls, such as Bob Dylan's autographed guitar from the cover of a 1984 live album and a handmade mariachi suit he wore on tour. Guests will also see a pair of sketches by John Lennon, a fur-trimmed purple jacket that belonged to Prince and an outrageous pair of platform shoes from the closet of Stanley Eisen – better known as Paul Stanley of KISS – as well as a beautiful custom instrument once owned by Canadian guitar virtuoso, Alex Lifeson, of Rush.

And as a testament to the old adage, "rock 'n' roll never dies," Hard Rock Cafe at The Rogers Centre boasts dueling walls of The Rolling Stones' and The Beatles' memorabilia. So far, The Beatles are ahead with 23 pieces, including the hand-written lyrics to "Get Back." But if Brit Rock isn't your thing, you can check out some cool stuff from this side of the pond, like the guitar Jimi Hendrix used when recording "Little Wing," the jacket Buddy Holly wore on tour or Bo Diddley's guitar "Lucille." There is a tribute room to the "King" himself, where you can get a peek at Elvis's silk pajamas, among other things.

After the tour, DeOliveira explains that this is all part of the experience, that his staff will design exactly the experience a guest is looking for. "For instance, you can have a sit-down dinner or a buffet. We have great sound, great lighting and video monitors throughout the cafes. We can set up for dancing or karaoke. We can even put together really fun loot bags from our Rock Shop. Whatever you need. Because to us, you're a rock star."

Hard Rock CAFE

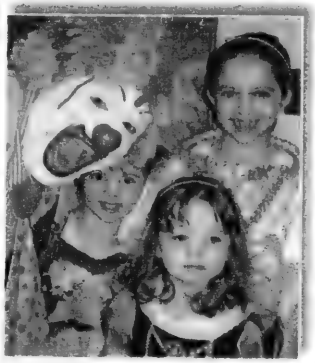
For more information on either cafe, contact Marcelo DeOliveira, 416-362-3636, toronto_salesmanager@hardrock.com, hardrock.com/toronto.

Hard Rock Cafe Toronto is located on Yonge St. at Dundas. Hard Rock Cafe at The Rogers Centre is located at 1 Blue Jays Way, Gate 1.

In Our Schools

NURSERY ROYALTY: King Achashverosh and Queen Esther – nursery students at Netivot HaTorah, Ronen and Annika – learn about the story of Purim.

[Rebecca Ansel photo]



PURIM PRINCESSES: At the Leo Baeck Day School's Thornhill campus Purim celebrations, princesses abounded. Students were treated to carnival games, face-painting, caricaturists, hamantashen and the story of Purim told in song by singer-guitarist Kayla. From left are Doo Doo the Clown, who has a show on Treehouse TV, Madi Sloss, Tori Sloss and Shayna Sloss.

To Our Readers — We will do our best to place as many Purim photos as we can on our website. www.cjnews.com

100TH DAY OF SCHOOL: Students at United Synagogue Day School's Beth Tikvah campus from junior kindergarten to Grade 5 celebrated the 100th day of school with activities and games, all in the comfort of their pajamas. The pennies collected as part of the 100th Day celebrations were donated to Pencils for Kids, an organization dedicated to getting pencils for children in Africa. From left, top row, are Matt Nadolny, Joshua Green, Ashley Krakower, Jake Sirkin, Sebi Zylberberg, and Mason Gillick. On floor, from left, are Jehonatan Ashkenazi, Sydney Appleby, Emma Ospalak, Sasha Chertkow, Sarah Argintaru, Maya Fridman, and Jonathan Wexler.

Schools owe $1 million in rent to TDSB

Compiled by CJN Staff

Two boys' schools serving the haredi community reportedly owe almost $1 million in back rent to the Toronto District School Board.

John Campbell, TDSB chair, was quoted last week as saying that the board prefers not to evict tenants that provide a service to the community, but he did not rule out evicting organizations that don't pay their rent.

One school, Yeshiva Bnei Tzion of Bobov, reportedly owes $251,190 in rent on Champlain Public School, near Bathurst Street and Wilson Avenue. The other, Yeshiva Yesodei Hatorah, reportedly owes $701,700 rent on Glen Rush Public School near Bathurst and Lawrence Avenue.

Campbell said that about 10 years ago, the two schools reached a deal with the board that said they would pay off the back rent when they bought the buildings they are occupying, but neither school has been able to complete its purchase.

He was quoted as saying that if the two schools were to raise money to buy the buildings, the outstanding rent would be added to the purchase price.

Calls by The CJN to the board and to each school went unanswered, but in a statement to the media, the director of Yeshiva Bnei Torah, who refused to give his name, said that the school has trouble paying rent because donors like to give money to buy "bricks and mortars," not for operating costs.

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'KOSHER' LABEL IN ADVERTISING

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

"In the labelling, packaging and advertising of a food, the Food and Drug Regulations prohibits the use of the word kosher or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or that is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet the requirements of the Kashruth applicable to it.

The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

Orthodoxy as heterodoxy

By RABBI YECHIEL GOLDREICH

Torah Jews are Jews who believe it's their God-given obligation to observe the Torah laws as explained and codified by Judaism's best and most dedicated scholars. That's the long and short of it.

It's why we don't drive on Shabbat, shave with razor blades or eat shellfish. It's why we observe the monthly mikvah rituals, wash our hands before eating bread and pray three times daily in separate-seating synagogues.

To some extent, it's also why we give charity, speak honestly, pay wages on time and avoid gossip.

As a community and as individuals, we can sometimes be inconsistent. We all have better and worse days, moments of strength and weakness, times when our personal practice falls short of our stated ideals, but we try our best to maintain our God-given ideals.

Although usually a Torah lifestyle can be pleasant, fun, and life-affirming, it is not always so. The Torah lifestyle is sometimes costly and demanding. It's sometimes, admittedly, inconvenient, contrary to common sense and complicated. If anything, it's idiosyncratic.

Rabbinic Reflections

That's just the way Torah is.

Therefore, it has become predictably upsetting to read the critical assessments by some who don't understand what Torah is and isn't. They portray anecdotal incident, community quirks and legitimate Torah particularity as all part of the same unflattering package.

Of course, women can play a new role in Jewish life, as can recognition of the State of Israel in our religious outlook, Holocaust memorializing in our liturgy, and scientific advances in our daily lives. But while it's true that the Torah community hasn't done enough work in these areas, those least educated in Torah should hardly be the ones aggressively advancing the most innovative ideas. They might mean well, but their thick, broad brushstrokes can often ruin a beautifully intricate pointillism.

The next time you hear complaints about "those religious types," recall the way you might listen to your well-meaning, non-Jewish Canadian co-workers who offer platitudinous opinions on the Middle East. You know where they're coming from and believe their heart to be in the right place, but you also know that they simply don't have a clue. They probably need to understand what they criticize before they aggressively go public with their opinions.

Rabbi Yechiel Goldreich is the rabbi of Congregation Bnai Torah in Toronto.

The Blessing of the Sun

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

On April 8, Jews around the world will have the opportunity to do something they haven't done since 1981 and won't be able to do again until 2037 – make a blessing. Not just any blessing, but a blessing on the sun.

Birkat HaChamah or "The Blessing of the Sun" is recited every 28 years or once every 10,227 days when, according to Jewish tradition, the Sun returns to the position it occupied at the beginning of the fourth day of Creation. It's always a Wednesday (the fourth day of the week) and always on the vernal equinox (the first day of spring, when day and night are equal in length.) **[tinyurl.com/chamah02]**

The blessing itself is quite brief: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who re-enacts the works of creation." For a relatively brief blessing that is recited so infrequently, there is a surprising amount of discussion and even controversy. First of all, doesn't Rosh Hashanah mark the creation of the world? And secondly, doesn't spring begin in March?

As for Rosh Hashanah, apparently there is a dispute in Jewish tradition about whether the New Year falls in Tishrei or six months earlier in Nisan. The Gemara concludes that although we count the years from Tishrei, when we calculate the moon and sun's cycles, the Halachah is that the world was created in Nisan. **[tinyurl.com/chamah04]** The Chabad site adds somewhat cryptically that "All agree that the world was created in Tishrei, but that God conceived the idea of creation in the month of Nisan." **[tinyurl.com/chamah03]**

Determining the first day of spring gets quite complicated, but that's largely due to the legacy of the switchover from the Julian to Gregorian calendars. **[tinyurl.com/chamah10]** To make matters even more interesting, this year's Birkat HaChamah falls on Erev Pesach, just hours before the first Seder. If you didn't have enough on your mind with cleaning the chametz and cooking, there's this, too.

This year's timing has created some buzz on the Internet, with claims that the final redemption (Geulah) is imminent, since this is only the third time in history that this blessing falls on the eve of Passover. Proponents say the only other times this has happened is when the Israelites left Egypt and in the time of events recorded in Megillat Esther. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be true. After performing some fancy calculations, the author of the Keitzmegueleh blog concludes, "The incidence of Birkat HaChamah with Erev Pesach is rare, but not unheard of. It last occurred only a few cycles ago in 5685 (1925). Persistence with a good Hebrew calendar program will show you that this has happened between 5 to 10 times in the last thousand years (sorry, it's been a while since I checked). We simply cannot say that the third time is the Geulah." **[tinyurl.com/chamah09]**

The Berachot.org site lists some of the Jewish laws associated with this special blessing:

- A minyan of 10 is not needed, but being part of a large group is preferable.
- A blind person should either hear the blessing from someone else and answer amen or say it by himself without saying God's name.
- The Shehechiyanu blessing is not recited. Some people have the custom to wear a new shirt and then say Shehechiyanu on the clothing. **[tinyurl.com/chamah01]**

And what happens if after 28 years of anticipation, you wake up to cloudy skies?

- If the sun is covered by clouds for the entire first three hours of the day, the blessing may still be said, so long as the sun's outline can been seen through the clouds or if any part of the sun is visible.
- If the sun is completely obscured by clouds, and one is not able to see it before three hours into the day, he may say the blessing without God's name.

If you prefer not to wait another 28 years to recite this blessing, you're in luck. It's also recited upon seeing lightning, very tall mountains or the Mediterranean Sea. **[tinyurl.com/chamah07]**

Next week, more on Birkat HaChamah and links for downloading the entire sun blessing ceremony.

* * *

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

Jewish Life

Endowments: the future is now

Money Matters

By Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

Tzedakah has become big business. With the amazing amounts of wealth created in the postwar period – the recession notwithstanding, we are blessed to be the wealthiest Jewish community in history – thousands of organizations compete for billions of dollars in philanthropy.

Myriads of professionals advise individuals and organizations on how to best maximize the benefits of giving. People no longer just write cheques. We have donations of art, stocks and real estate. Estate planning and foundations allow us to give from the grave. Directors of development are key executives who help organize dinners, journals, concerts, speakers, slogans and marketing campaigns in this growth industry.

Despite the great efforts expended on fundraising, many needs are going unmet, presumably because of lack of funds. Day school tuition continues to rise beyond the means of many – in fact, the last number of years has witnessed many economic drop-outs and decreasing enrolment.

Yet at the same time, the Bernard Madoff Ponzi scandal in the United States has brought to light the staggering amounts sitting in endowment funds. Billions of dollars already earmarked and donated for charitable purposes were ostensibly wiped out overnight, and the losses even forced some Jewish charities to shut down. These losses compound the billions that organizations have lost in the stock markets.

Imagine the impact on Jewish life had these billions actually been spent. The charitable stimulus could have helped us fight an assimilation rate that hovers at around 50 per cent, or provided additional help to the one in six Jews living at or below the poverty line. It could have offered millions to our day schools for such things as teacher training and retention and programs for children with special needs, and it could have provided programming for university campuses. Such funds are desperately needed to help settle Jewish immigrants and to help battered woman, as well as for subsidized housing, at-risk children, security for our institutions, and the many programs in need of support in Israel.

In short, this money could have helped transform our community today, more so than the unspent – and now never-to-be-spent – lost billions ever could.

It's noteworthy that arguably the most successful Jewish initiative in recent years, Birthright Israel (offering free trips to Israel for young Jews aged 18 to 26), consciously decided not to set up an endowment fund. Rather, all of its resources have been used to send more youth to Israel today, an investment that will pay dividends for years to come.

Ironically, the great supposed benefits of endowments in providing a constant flow of income to an organization in good times or bad has proven illusory. That flow has been greatly reduced (and, at five to six per cent, it was never quite large enough to begin with). While governments the world over are pumping money into their economies, many large charities are looking to cut back, afraid of further depleting their shrinking endowments.

While some form of endowments may have their place, with so many needs right before our eyes, it seems hard to justify having millions and billions invested for the future. Jewish law is based on the premise that present needs must take priority over uncertain needs in the future. Can we afford to save for tomorrow when so many Jews are disappearing today? This is especially important to consider when investments run the risk of negative returns.

Spending down our endowments will generate enormous benefits today. It will also deny us the ability to rest on our laurels, forcing us to find new and creative ways to meet the unknown challenges that await us in the future.

Focusing on present needs may also reflect an important theological notion. Prophecy, the Talmud asserts, rests only with children and fools. The future plans of the Almighty are beyond human comprehension. We must not put off dealing with the challenges of today because of concern over an unknown and unknowable future.

All we wanted was to pray at the Kotel

Ideas on Identity

By Rabbi Elyse Goldstein

I write this column from rainy Jerusalem, where tourists curse the rain but Jerusalemites bless it after the terrible drought they've had. I've had the privilege of participating, along with 300 others, in the 120th anniversary conference of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the umbrella professional organization of all Reform rabbis. (Sure there are Israeli, European and Canadian rabbis in the organization, but aren't we all American? Memo to the powers that be: time to change the name.) By the way, the umbrella organization of the Conservative rabbinate also had its conference in Jerusalem, ending the day before ours began. Is it just me, or did anyone else notice a giant missed opportunity for shared learning, collaborative politicking and the combined power of 600 non-Orthodox rabbis in the same room in Jerusalem?

The most powerful moment of the conference for me was not in plenary sessions or in planned excursions, although all of those were good. The most powerful moment was being screamed at on the women's side of the Kotel by the shomeret, the female guard whose job it is to keep the women's side of the Western Wall clean, orderly and appropriately "holy."

As many of you no doubt read in the news, a group of about 75 female rabbis went to the Kotel on Rosh Chodesh Adar at 6:30 a.m. to pray. I was part of that group. We didn't have a Torah like on the men's side. We didn't have an obvious prayer leader who proudly stood in the front at a table, leading the service in a voice we could all hear.

Instead, we adhered to the Kotel's notion of "modesty" and prayed quietly, daring to raise our voices ever so slightly only at Hallel. Some of us also dared to wear our tallitot over our coats and not under them, and that's when a riot almost ensued.

The female guard decided that she couldn't tolerate this breach. Never mind that she brought over two male police officers to the women's side to quiet us down, and never mind that there were scores of beggars aggressively pushing for alms right behind her under a clearly posted sign stating that "It is forbidden to beg at the Kotel." Never mind that pious men spent the whole time yelling at us from way across the mechitzah instead of davening their morning prayers (where it's doubtful they could have heard us unless they were trying really hard to). And never mind that one of my male colleagues got his camera ripped from his arm and thrown down on the stone plaza from one of these pious men when he attempted to photograph the event.

The press appeared, and almost 100 web postings proliferated after a small article was carried by Ha'aretz. Comments on Ha'aretz's website included everything from "American provokers go home!" to "Hasidim go back to Poland!" Yikes. It seems that despite the economic downturn, the security situation, the sorry state of education, recent elections and just about everything else, nothing can inflame Israeli passions like a bunch of sincere women davening shacharit at a very early hour at the back of the women's side of Judaism's holiest site – the site where any Jewish man, no matter how ignorant or non-observant or insincere, can daven in full voice and with full security.

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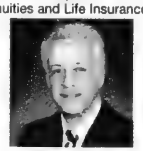

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Reena event to feature auction of clients' artwork

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The co-chairs of Not Just Another Saturday Night, in its fifth year, are gearing up to raise money for Reena, an Ontario-based organization for people with developmental disabilities.

Over the past four years, the event – conceived by Reena's new leadership division, a volunteer group of young professionals – has raised more than $100,000 for services such as after-school programs, summer programs and respite care.

The fifth annual Not Just Another Saturday Night is being held March 21 at the Academy of Spherical Arts in downtown Toronto.

This year, in addition to a cocktail reception, live entertainment, music, a raffle and an art show during which local artists can display their work, Reena clients will also be auctioning off their own artwork.

Sheri Becker, one of the six co-chairs, said that late last month, Reena held an event called Painting with the Stars.

"We got Reena clients to paint and we're going to auction the pieces off at the event," Becker said.

Carrie Fisher, a local Toronto artist, teamed up with Reena's new leadership division to raise funds for the organization in a program that was meant to provide "kids with the opportunity to develop their artistic potential by using creativity and imagination," Reena said on its website.

Becker said that Painting with the Stars gave some of Reena's clients an opportunity to be part of the event.

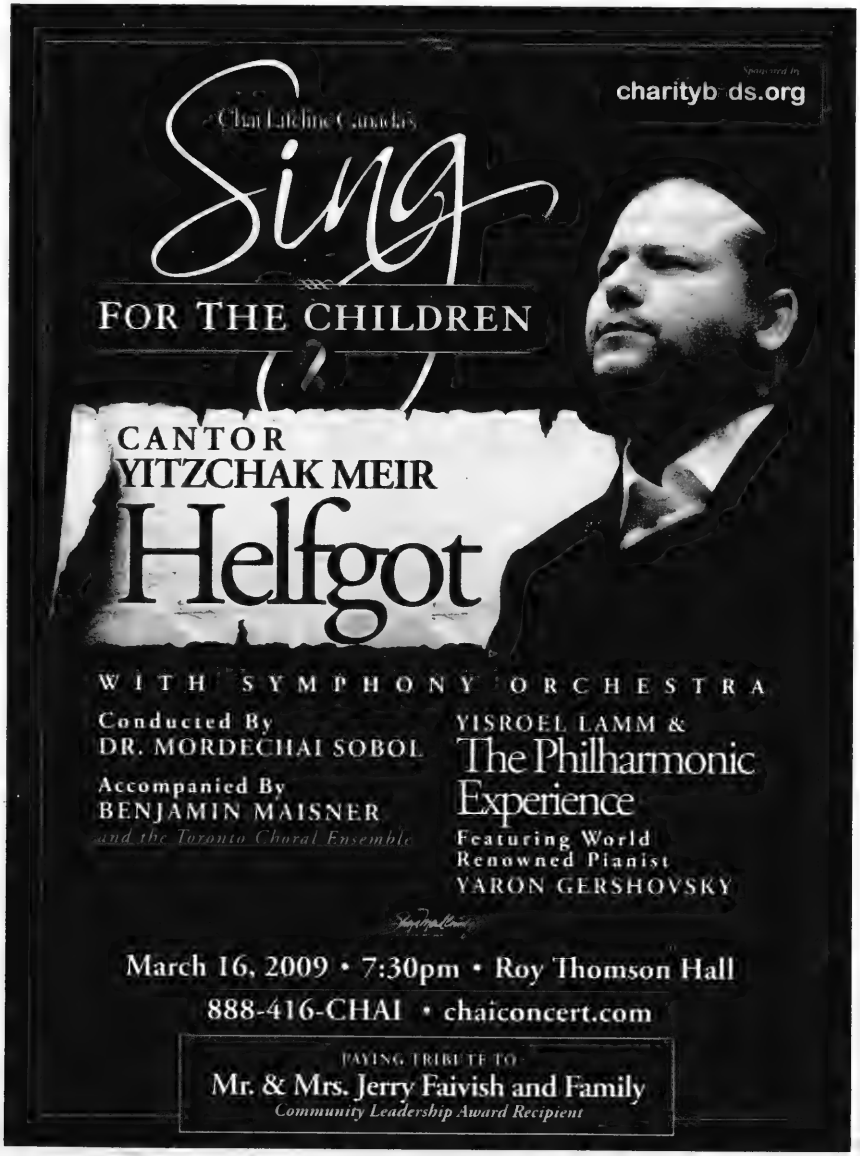
"It was so amazing to see the committee getting involved, the clients getting involved, the Reena staff were involved and it was just so nice that everyone was on the same page and at the same level."

Sheri Becker, right, a co-chair of Reena's Not Just Another Saturday Night fundraiser, helped Rebecca, a Reena client, with her painting that will be auctioned off at the event.

She said that last year's Not Just Another Saturday Night managed to raise about $40,000, but her goal for this year is a little more conservative because of the recession.

"We're expecting 500 people… and we hope to raise about $30,000," she said.

For tickets, call 905-764-1081, ext. 34.



Anti-racism program marks milestone

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Representatives of Fighting Antisemitism Together (FAST) and Canadian Jewish Congress' charities committee joined some 200 students at Toronto's Lord Lansdowne Public School last week to celebrate a milestone in the life of "Choose Your Voice," (CYJ) the anti-racism and anti-Semitism program for Grade 6, 7 and 8 students launched by the two groups in 2005.

The event was held to mark the announcement that the program – founded by Tony Comper, immediate past president and CEO of BMO Financial Group, and his wife Elizabeth, a former teacher – has reached almost half a million Canadian elementary school students.

School principal Angela Marsh said the event "at its heart celebrates our country's diversity."

Student Sakinna Gairey read a poem titled Unity.

On a video prepared for the occasion, students at the multicultural school commented on the program. "It taught me to be nice to people that are different," said one.

"I don't laugh at racist jokes any more," said another.

Ontario Education Minister Kathleen Wynne, said that "hearing the kids speak… takes my breath away," and she called CYJ "an exceptional resource."

"One of Ontario's greatest assets is that we have such a diverse population," she said, adding that the public education system "teaches society how to get along. All the people who use our schools in Ontario deserve a place that's free of… discrimination, and respects and honours diversity."

Megan Tran, a Grade 8 student at the school and co-MC for the afternoon, said, "We will use our voices to ensure that mistakes of the past are not repeated in the future."

The event showcased student artwork and performances, including *Stand Together*, a song composed by music teachers Laurence Gilman and Edward Hayes, and performed by the "Choose Your Voice Ensemble."

Elizabeth Comper, who spoke along with her husband, read a letter from a teacher who had used the program. Among her students were bullies who wrote that they didn't realize what they were doing was harmful.

Other outcomes included students befriending others from different ethnic backgrounds, the teacher wrote.

"I can't be more proud of you," Bernie Farber, CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress, told the students.

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MENU #2
Gefilte Fish & Horseradish
Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls
Roast Chicken
Roast Brisket of Beef
Lockshen Pudding
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Carrots Tzimmes
Cole Slaw
Lemon Roll
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Passover Cookies
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MENU #3 -low fat menu
Gefilte Fish & Horseradish
Cabbage Borscht
Roast Turkey Breast (precarved)
Farfel & Mushrooms
Candied Yams
Green Beans Almondine
Cole Slaw
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Passover Cookies
Seder Plate
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MENU #4
Gefilte Fish & Horseradish
Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls
Roast Brisket of Beef
Chicken Fingers
Lockshen Pudding
Pan Roast Potatoes
Green Beans Almondine
Cole Slaw
Honey Cake
Mandlebroit
Passover Cookies
Seder Plate
Charoses
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MENU #5
Gefilte Fish & Horseradish
Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls
Roast Chicken
Roast Brisket of Beef
Chicken Fingers
Lockshen Pudding
Green Beans Almondine
Passover Cookies
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Farfel & Mushrooms
Potato Latkes
Green Beans Almondine
Broccoli & Mushrooms
Handmade Egg Noodles
Seder Plates
Charoses

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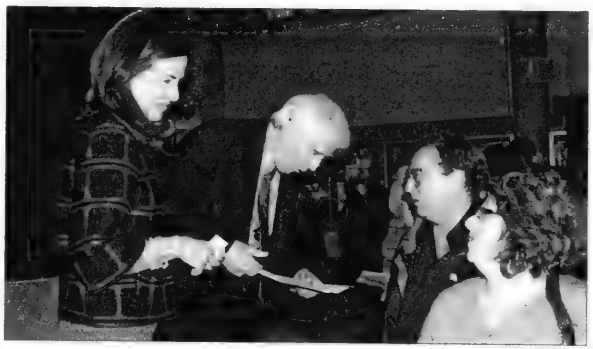


From left, Dr. Marla Shapiro and Dr. Fergus Craik speak with audience members after the talk. [Kelly Connelly/Baycrest photo]

Keeping active strengthens memory, research shows

By LEILA SPEISMAN
Staff Reporter

Keeping active physically, intellectually and socially will help offset the inevitable losses of memory that come with aging, says Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute senior scientist Dr. Fergus Craik.

Internationally recognized for his studies on human memory processes, Craik was recently elected a fellow of the Royal Society, the national science academy in Britain, and is co-editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Memory*.

He recently spoke about age-related memory loss as part of Baycrest's Aging, Innovation and the Mind speaker series. Host for the program was CTV Canada AM's health and medical contributor, Dr. Marla Shapiro.

Stressing that he was not speaking about those with dementia or Alzheimer's disease, Craik said that some kinds of memory do hold up – primary memory, such as remembering phone numbers or long-term facts; and procedural memory, such as how to play the piano or a sport.

What does fall off, he said, are episodic memory (what did I have for dinner last night?), prospective memory (I have to call the doctor tomorrow and book an appointment – and then remember to do it) and memory for details such as names.

"It doesn't matter if you can't find your keys," he said. "What does matter is not remembering what the keys are for."

Craik suggested making it a policy to, for instance, always keep your keys in the same place.

The more meaningful a memory is for you, the easier it is to remember it, he said. He told the story of a woman having trouble remembering the password for something. The password was "DJ," and she finally linked it to her son's bar mitzvah party, where there was a DJ.

Another change in memory over time is that people have less ability to focus on several things at the same time. For instance, he said, teenagers have no problem studying and retaining what they studied while listening to music. "As we get older, we are less able to block off outside information, and that becomes progressively harder."

In that case, he said, adjust your environment when you are trying to learn, do or listen to something – "turn off the TV and tell people to stop talking around you."

Your environment gives you cues to remembering things. "That's why when a senior moves to a different apartment where everything is different, memory seems to worsen, at least for a time."

It is easier, Craik said, to remember general information than to recall exact details. For instance, when "trying to remember where you parked the car in a parking lot, remembering that you parked on the red level is easier than remembering that you parked in section D7."

He emphasized that physical activity helps maintain not only a healthy body, but also healthy brain function. He quoted an old saying: "What's good for the heart, is good for the brain."

Members of the audience asked about factors they had heard can affect the brain – for example that being bilingual all your life may have a positive effect, chemotherapy may interfere with memory, and genetics can play a role one way or the other. Craik suggested that perhaps all these factors, along with diet and lifestyle, may combine in the process.

Clinical psychologist Kelly Murphy joined Craik and Shapiro for the question period. "Look for ways to spend your leisure time, especially after you retire," Murphy said. "Choose activities that you feel are enjoyable and challenging," such as doing crossword puzzles, playing sports and talking to your friends.

Food, Scrumptious Food

When our kids discover the kitchen…

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Although my three sons are quite grown-up now – two are in local universities and one is in high school, they still sometimes fight like 10-year-olds.

The fighting has abated in the last five or six years, but I'm still refereeing far more physical bouts than I should be at this stage of the boys' lives.

This year, we experienced some curtailment of the altercations. But I discovered that keeping the peace on the home front had its price.

Sometime in December, my middle son, Evan, told me that he had serious concerns about his big brother.

"Leigh used to like to fight," Evan said. "Now all he wants to do is cook. He'd rather make honey balls."

Matthew, my youngest son – he was within earshot of this discussion – was quite pleased with this development. "Leigh's cooking is the best!" he said.

It was hard to miss Leigh's new-found passion for the culinary arts. He was an exceptionally untidy cook. After he made a batch of honey balls, our shoes would stick to the floor.

I used to buy this traditional Greek dessert from time to time in our old neighbourhood. But the deep-fried sugary dish had become a rare treat once we moved away.

Leigh's foray into cooking began when he discovered a recipe for honey balls on the Internet. When he realized he could make them himself, there was no stopping him.

Night after night, he would try different recipes to perfect these dishes. One day, a sauce would be too sweet or too tart, or it would be too runny or too sticky. Then he went on to tackle brownies.

Leigh mixing up his dough

I was torn about what to do about this culinary output. It was messy and unhealthy, but I worried that if I set limits, I might stymie my son's creative aspirations.

Fast forward to my conversation about Leigh's cooking with my younger sons. During this discussion, Matthew admonished his middle brother: "Evan, what are you complaining about? Does Mom bake honey balls or brownies? She would never make us lemon chicken. She only makes healthy stuff."

I could tell by the pensive expression on Evan's face, that he was not convinced all this so-called "good food" was a suitable substitute for a good fight.

Not long ago, I, too, began having my doubts about this tradeoff. It was the morning after a culinary double header – lemon chicken and brownies. The kitchen was a disaster.

Standing in the doorway and surveying the mess, I realized that when it comes to peace in the home, there are worse things than shoving matches in the family room.

I had managed to live with the fighting all these years, but there was no way I could possibly endure the endless upheaval in the kitchen. I decided right then and there to shelve Leigh Cuisine – indefinitely.

I got out the cleaning supplies, and as I began scrubbing chocolate off the wall, an old adage came to mind: "Be careful what you wish for."

HONEY BALLS
(Loukoumades)

Batter
2 packages active dry yeast
4 oz. warm water (105 to 115° F)
8 oz. warm milk (105 to 115°F)
1/4 cup sugar
1 tsp. salt
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled
3 cups flour, sifted
vegetable oil, for deep-frying
ground cinnamon, to taste

In a small bowl, sprinkle yeast over the warm water and let stand to soften (about 5 minutes). Meanwhile, pour milk into a large bowl and add sugar and salt.

Stir yeast mixture and eggs into milk mixture; add butter and beat well. Slowly add flour, beating continuously until batter is smooth, sticky and thick.

Add more flour as needed to arrive at correct consistency for handling. Cover bowl with a tea towel and let dough rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk (2 to 3 hours).

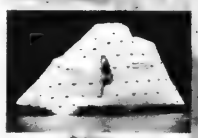
In a medium saucepan pour oil to a depth of 3 or 4 in. and heat to 360. Stir batter well. Drop batter from a tablespoon into hot oil and cook, turning spoonfuls in oil, until batter puffs and is golden brown on all sides (about 2 minutes).

Remove balls with a slotted utensil to paper towels to drain briefly, then arrange a layer of balls on a platter.

Honey Syrup
1 tbsp. lemon juice, freshly squeezed
1 tsp. grated lemon zest
2 tsp. ground cinnamon, to taste
1 cup honey
1/2 cup water
1/4 cup sugar

Place honey, sugar and water in a small saucepan, mix to combine and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until sugar is completely dissolved. Stir in lemon juice and lemon zest and simmer until lightly thickened. Remove from heat and keep warm.

Drizzle the balls with warm honey syrup, dust with cinnamon, and top with a second layer of balls. Continue in this manner until all the balls are layered and dressed. Serve at once.



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EVENT DETAILS
Uncertain Economic Times
With Ron Shawley, Certified Financial Planner and Dawna Borg, Realtor
Monday, March 23rd
6:30pm - 7:30pm
RSVP to Ann Marie, Marsha or Rhona at 905-731-4300. Reference "Concerns for these Economic Times."

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The truth about Netanyahu? It's complicated

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Overwhelmingly, journalists describe Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu, whom Israeli President Shimon Peres has asked to form a governing coalition, as opposing statehood for the Palestinians. However, Netanyahu actually holds a more nuanced view that's not being accurately portrayed in most media accounts.

For example, in "Israel's big stick" (Maclean's, Feb. 25) Michael Petrou wrote: "Likud, led by one-time prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has a party platform that flatly rejects the establishment of a Palestinian state 'west of the Jordan River' (i.e., in the West Bank or Gaza)."

While this was once Likud's official position, the party amended its platform in October 2006, omitting the section that expressly ruled out Palestinian statehood. However, the full platform is available only in Hebrew and is, therefore, not accessible to many journalists. And while its rival, the Kadima party, openly endorses a two-state solution, Likud does not, leaving vague its preferred outcome of final-status negotiations.

During the recent election campaign, Netanyahu articulated his party's position on national security issues facing Israel, including Palestinian statehood. It's available online at http://en.netanyahu.org.il/themes-of/security/.

Some highlights include:

• "Likud is prepared to make concessions in exchange for peace, such as [former prime minister] Menachem Begin did in the peace treaty with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat – concessions in exchange for a true and reliable peace agreement."

• There will be no more unilateral withdrawals, such as the 2005 withdrawal from Gaza.

• While helping the Palestinians "rapidly develop their economy" and improve their day-to-day lives "will not resolve the conflict," it can "create an environment" in which "a final settlement negotiation" can succeed.

• UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 are the basis for ensuring Israel's security.

Kadimah leader Tzipi Livni and Netanyahu attempt to negotiate a coalition agreement. [Isranet photo]

This position allows room for accepting eventual Palestinian statehood. In fact, in "Don't make the same mistake" (National Post, Mar. 2), Tom Gross wrote that Netanyahu "has been wrongly vilified as being against a two-state solution. In fact, he is open to the creation of a Palestinian state – but only if it is one that will live in peace with Israel."

On the other hand, in "Netanyahu: Clinton and I found common ground" (Ha'aretz, March 3), Barak Ravid wrote: "Netanyahu has spoken of Palestinian self-government, but has shied away from saying he would back a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict."

So where does the truth lie?

Many Israeli analysts say that the left-right divide in Israeli politics is not nearly as pronounced as it used to be, and that Netanyahu, like former prime minister Ariel Sharon, is at bottom more pragmatic than ideological. If there were a final status agreement that recognizes Israel as a Jewish state and provides for its security, while also creating a Palestinian state, Likud, as well as the Kadima and the Labor parties, would arguably support it.

While a majority of Israelis would like to see this outcome (since it would preserve Israel as both a Jewish and democratic state), most know that current conditions don't allow for it. Even if Israel today were willing to make all manner of territorial concessions, there could be no peace due to the wide split within the Palestinian leadership, with a weak Fatah faction holding sway in the West Bank and the rejectionist Hamas controlling Gaza.

Israelis have grown skeptical and realistic in the short term, even as they remain hopeful for a solution in the long term. Thus, it's important for the media to avoid black-and-white characterizations of Israeli politics as deeply divided between "hardliners" and "peaceniks." The truth is far more complicated than that.

* * *

In a July 6 (2008) Toronto Sun column on relations between the United States, Iran and Israel, Eric Margolis made the following claim: "According to Israel's media, President [George W.] Bush even told Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert that he could not trust America's intelligence community and preferred to rely on Israeli intelligence."

On Feb. 14, the Toronto Sun issued a "Clarification," admitting that Bush "did not specifically say he could not trust [his intelligence community's] reports."

In what should have appeared as a "Correction," the Sun should have added both that Bush did not tell Olmert that he preferred to rely on Israeli intelligence, and also that "Israel's media" reported no such statements from Bush to Olmert.

How did Margolis manage to get so many basic "facts" so wrong? Did he just make them up?

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

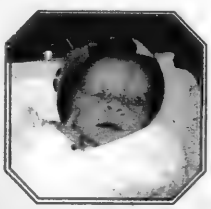
The Canadian Jewish News

Happy second birthday, Ari Ryan. Parents, Reesa & Corey Margolese. Grandparents, Arlene & Allan Margolese, Ruth & Leonard Rosen. Great-grandmothers, Ruth Margolese, Fay Rose, Tillie Berlin.

Happy 50th wedding anniversary to our parents/grandparents, Len & Ruthie Kahane - a couple who continue to inspire us every day. With love and pride, your "kids."

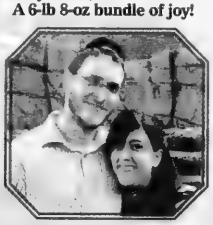
Sylvia Krinsky, Annette & Oscar Coleman announce the upcoming wedding of their children Elisa & Randy. Lovingly remembered is Zev Krinsky. A May wedding is planned.

Dr. Natalie (Pakes) & Steven Gar joyfully welcome their twins, born in Jerusalem: a sister, Talia Rivka, and a brother, Eitan, for Gavriel Reuven (Gabi).



Lauren Kramer & Mark Aginsky are thrilled to announce the arrival of Maya Yael, born Feb. 20. A 6-lb 8-oz bundle of joy!

Mazel tov on the engagement of Amanda Schwartz & David Kirsh from parents Susan & Elliott Schwartz and Marion & Gary Kirsh.



Mazel tov to Pinny & Rachel Polowin (Shabat) on their first anniversary.

Jodi & Mark Lindsey present Sarah, sister for Samuel. Grandparents Linda & Gary Wolk, Jacquie & Lloyd Lindsey; great-grandparents Florrie & Ralph Kay, Fay Wolk, Minnie Grandville.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to **cblackman@cjnews.com** or go online to **WWW.CJNEWS.COM** and click the **Family Moments** button!

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What's New deadlines: Monday, March 16, is the deadline for the March 26 issue and Monday, March 23, is the deadline for the April 2 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Thursday, March 12

GOLDSCHMIDT'S GUILT

Prof. Sam Weber, of Northwestern University, delivers the **Hermann Levin Goldschmidt** Memorial Lecture "The Question of Guilt and the Turn Toward the Future: Goldschmidt's Guilt from the Standpoint of Judaism." 4 p.m. at U of T Munk Centre.

OPERA YORK AUDITIONS

Opera York concludes auditions tonight for the November 2009 Hebrew opera And the Rat Laughed. Applicants must be professional opera singers, preferably Hebrew speaking. Send resumé, picture and contact info, laura@operayork.com.

Saturday, March 14

B'NAI SHALOM SERVICES

Join B'Nai Shalom, an egalitarian Congregation, for its monthly Shabbat service in an Oakville hotel. 10 a.m. Location, 905-901-9889 or www.bnaishalom.ca.

Sunday, March 15

NOVAK BOOK LAUNCH

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation hosts the launch of **David Novak**'s book In Defense of Religious Liberty, arguing the primacy of divine law as a foundation for democracy. 10 a.m. 416-789-3213

RIBBONS AND ROSES

Toronto's Delta Pi, a Jewish sorority, holds its 14th annual auction 12:30-3:30 p.m. $5, proceeds go to Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation for breast cancer research. Tickets, 416-280-6482.

A FAILURE OF LANGUAGE

Gary Levine, of Tanenbaum-CHAT, on "Israel and the Palestinians: A Failure of Language," the complex issues facing Israel and Gaza considering short- and long-term solutions. 7:30 p.m. at Kehillat Shaarei Torah. $10. 416-229-2600

Monday, March 16

SING FOR THE CHILDREN

Support Chai Lifeline Canada at a concert featuring **Cantor Yizchak Meir Helfgot**, the Symphony Orchestra, **Cantor Benjamin Maisner**'s Toronto Choral Ensemble, pianist **Yaron Gershovsky**, and **Yisroel Lamm** and the Philharmonic Experience. 7:30 p.m. at Roy Thomson Hall. Tickets, www.chaiconcert.com.

MOSES THROUGH ART

Beth Emeth Synagogue hosts the **Leon Eisner** Memorial Lecture with **Rouhama Danto** on "The Life of Moses Through Art." 8 p.m. 416-633-3838

Tuesday, March 17

JEWISH LITERATURE

Treasure of Jewish Literature Book Series presents **Janna Nadler** reviewing A Pigeon and a Boy by **Meir Shalev**. Refreshments 1 p.m. Program 1:30-3 p.m. Lipa Green Building. $15. 416-636-1880, ext. 235

THE PINK TALLIS

Darchei Noam Congregation presents "The Pink Tallis: A Sign of Success?" **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein** speaks about the state of Jewish feminism today. 7:30 p.m. 416-638-4783 or www.darcheinoam.ca

STROH ZIONISM SERIES

Rabbi Michael Stroh continues a series on Zionism and the Idea of Israel. 7:30 p.m. Non-members $5. 905-889-2252, ext. 5

CHUG HATANACH

Seymour Epstein leads a study group in a discussion of Nehmiah, Chapter 8. 8 p.m. at Beth David Congregation. All welcome.

COPING WITH MENOPAUSE

Beth David Sisterhood presents "Coping with Menopause," a panel

Continued on page 25

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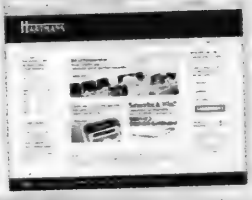

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Continued from page 24

discussion with **Helen Rose**, **Mitchell Zeifman**, naturopathic doctor, and **Linda Tenenbaum**, tai chi and qigong instructor. 8 p.m. Non-members $5.

Wednesday, March 18

BOOK REVIEW

Beth Tzedec Sisterhood reviews The Man in The Sharkskin Suit by **Lucette Lagnado**. 7:30 p.m. Admission, $5 donation to chesed committee. 416-789-3511

THE BOOK OF DVARIM

Beth David Congregation offers three interactive lectures on Dvarim. Tonight, "An Introduction to Dvarim" with **Rabbi Philip Scheim**, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, April 23, "The Haftorot of Isaiah" with **Shayna Kravitz**; and Thursday, June 4, "Dvarim from a Feminine Perspective" with **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein**. Pre-registration required, $20, non-members $30, or $10/class. 416-633-5500

POMEGRANATE GUILD

The Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles hosts Techniques Night. Includes making Pesach pillows, painting, fusing and embroidering Hebrew letters and Pesach motifs. All supplies provided, bring your sewing kits. 8 p.m. at the Shaarei Shomayim-Congregation. Guests $5. info@pomegranteguild.ca

DIABETES

Rehab supervisor **Diane Nixon** on "Take Charge With Exercise" at the general meeting of the Jewish Diabetes Chapter. 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. $1. 416-363-0177, ext. 7403

Other News

STUDY WITH STRAUCHLER

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler on "The Laws of Passover," Monday, March 16, 9:30 a.m., and Tuesday, March 17, 8 p.m. The following week on March 23 and 24, he will speak about the Haggadah at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. 416-789-3213

VOLUNTEER IN ARGENTINA

Ve'ahavta: The Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee is offering an information session about volunteer/travel in Buenos Aires, Argentina, for six weeks to assist the Jewish community by working in various social service agencies. Information session, Thursday, March 19, 6:30-7:30 p.m. 2221 Yonge St. #12. RSVP, katie@veahavta.org or 416-964-7698.

CELEBRATE SHABBAT

Beth Emeth Synagogue hosts Shabbat Across North America, Friday, March 20. Join Jews across the continent as they celebrate Shabbat, Shir Hadash service 7 p.m. Dinner 8 p.m. $20, children 13 and under $12. Non-members $25, children $17. Reserve, 416-633-3838.

BEACHES ONEG SHABBAT

Friday, March 20, the Beaches Synagogue hosts a potluck dinner at 6:15 p.m. followed by a musical Oneg Shabbat led by **Susan Lichen** and **Karen Gold**, 7:15 p.m. Bring a veggie or dairy dish. 416-694-7942

NORENE GILLETZ

Holy Blossom Sisterhood presents "A Panic-free Passover" a demonstration with **Norene Gilletz**. Wednesday, March 25, 6:30 p.m. $30 in advance, $36 at the door. 416-789-3291, ext. 221

FRUM ON OBAMA & ISRAEL

David Frum on "A Frightening Question: The Obama Administration and the Security of Israel" at Canadian Friends of Laniado Hospital's annual **Dr. Joseph Weil** Memorial Lecture. Thursday, March 26, 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. $18. Reserve, 416-785-8946.

FAMILY ONEG SHABBAT

Pride of Israel Synagogue hosts a family Oneg Shabbat, dinner and program, Friday, April 3. Services 6:30 p.m. RSVP by Monday, March 16, 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

STUDY TOUR OF BERLIN

The Holocaust Centre of Toronto and Centrum Judaicum Berlin offers a study tour of Berlin for Jewish educators and teachers in their 20s and 30s grappling with issues of Holocaust education and remembrance and contemporary Jewish life in Germany. June 29-July 9. Application deadline, April 1. Info, cphillips@ujafed.org or www.germanycloseup.de.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Circle of Care needs volunteers for one to two hours a week to visit isolated seniors in their homes. Sharing tea, socializing, playing cards, go for a walk and friendly conversations. Professional staff provides support and training. Contact **Penny**, 416-635-2860, ext. 462 or pedwards@circleofcare.com

JIAS TORONTO

Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, 4600 Bathurst St. #325. www.jiastoronto.org. To register, volunteer, or information call 416-630-6481.

SINGLES EVENTS WILL RETURN

What's New

Passover Seder Hosts: Welcome a newcomer family to your seder table, contact Joanna, ext. 30.

Homework Club: Volunteer to help newcomer middle and high school students with English and other academic subjects on Wednesday evenings. Knowledge of Hebrew or Russian is an asset. Contact **Joanna**, ext. 30

JUMPStart: If you have a volunteer, mentoring or job opportunity in skilled labour market for a newcomer, call **Simone**, ext. 24.

Family-to-Family: Welcome newcomer families and provide informal advice and orientation to our community. Call **Romm**, ext. 28

Shindman/Sharna Scholarships, financial support for new immigrant Jewish students pursuing post-secondary degrees or upgrading skills. Application deadline is April 24. www.jiastoronto.org

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child Service. 4600 Bathurst St. Call **Shawna** 416-638-7800, ext. 215, for info and registration. www.jfandcs.com.

Younger Widow/Widower Bereavement Group: Six sessions for individuals 60 and under who have recently lost a partner or spouse. Begins Tuesday, March 24, 7:30-9 p.m. Lipa Green Building.

Birthdays, Hockey Games and Holidays: Making It Work After Divorce. A workshop for parents. Monday, March 30, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green Building.

Adult Children Losing a Parent: Six sessions for those who have recently lost a parent. Begins Tuesday, March 31, 7:30-9 p.m. Lipa Green Building.

FOR SENIORS

Beth Tikvah Friendship Group's Purim Party takes place Thursday, March 12, 2-4 p.m. Dance and sing with **Rita** and **Max**. $10. Reservations, 416-221-3433.

Beth Shalom Chai Society hosts "Matzah, Midrash and Music," learning and singing with **Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich** and **Cantor Eric Moses**. Wednesday, March 18, noon. Lunch and program $10. 416-783-6103, ext. 228

Temple Sinai Social Club Lunch Programs presents **Fern Dworkin**, singer and pianist. Wednesday, March 18, 12:30 p.m. $5, non-members $7. Reserve, 416-487-3281.

The Association of Jewish Seniors presents **Steven Shulman**, of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto on "United Jewish Appeal and the Israel Connection." Thursday, March 19, 9:30 a.m. at Shaarei Shomayim. Guests $2. RSVP to **Tammy**, 416-635-2860.

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC: Enjoy an inter-generational lunch, Thursday March 19, noon. Free. Pre-register, 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Movie day, Mamma Mia, Thursday, March 19, 1:30 p.m. Call Tuesday-Thursday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Book Talk and Tea with **Celine Kessler** reviewing The Saturday Wife by **Naomi Ragen**. Wednesday, March 18, 1:30-2:30 p.m. $8, non-members $10.

Wellness Lecture, "Keeping Fit As We Age" with **Yossi Strauch**, musculoskeletal specialist, Thursday, March 19, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

WAGMAN CENTRE

55 Ameer Ave. 416-785-2500.

Smile Theatre performs the musical Extraordinary. Tuesday, March 17, 7-8 p.m.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Congregation Shir Libeynu and Miles Nadal JCC present "Purimania: A Grown-up Celebration of the Adventures of Queen Esther." Saturday, March 14, 8 p.m. $5. Reservations, 416-465-5488 shirlibeynu@yahoo.ca.

Sundays on Bloor: **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein** on "New Jewish Feminism: Probing the Past, Forging the Future." Sunday, March 15, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. $9, includes a light breakfast. jewishlife@mnjcc.org or ext. 154

Toronto Jewish Film Society presents Contemporary Israeli Voices: 3 short films – The Red Toy; The 74th; Out For Love, Be Back Shortly with **Shlomo Schwartzberg** Sunday, March 15, 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Al Green Theatre. film@mnjcc.org

Never/Again: Photos of Terezin and Rwanda. Jacobs Lounge Visual Art Space. March 12-April 26.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

"Break Camps," March Break Camp, March 16-20 and Passover Break Camp, April 16-17. Ext. 378 or centrecamp@bjcc.ca.

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OBITUARIES
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Helen Fonberg	Feb 21/09	35 Wynford Heights Cr
Sydney Faibish	Feb 22/09	8 Erica Ave
Ben Yomen Simon Prossin	Feb 20/09	10 Torresdale Ave S
Dr. Ladislaus Vogel	Feb 21/09	69 Highbourne Rd
Steven Sebestyen	Feb 22/09	30 Greenfield Ave
Matthew Gonick	Feb 23/09	888 Lawrence Ave E
Tibby Sheres	Feb 25/09	2 Covington Rd
Melvin Zwaig	Feb 26/09	20 Adelaide St East
Vera Morrison	Feb 26/09	90 Fisherville Rd
David Rosen	Feb 28/09	160 Wellesley St E
Albert Drexler	Feb 28/09	182 Blythwood Rd

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Tishcoff, Harvey	Feb. 9/09	17 Cadillac Ave
Katkov, Isaak	Feb. 23/09	Private
Steinfeld, Harry	Feb. 19/09	3636 Bthurst St
Halpert, Jeffrey	Feb. 20/09	39 Westborough St
Korson, Bert	Feb. 20/09	4005 Bayview Ave
Vikhman, Vladimir	Feb. 20/09	601 Clark Ave. W.
Berliner, Itzhak Meier	Feb. 22/09	
Galperin, Simon	Feb. 19/09	132 Arnold Ave
Balaban, Irving	Feb. 22/09	10 Michael Crt
Gerlock, Harvey	Feb. 23/09	326 Major Mackenzie
Berman, Motel	Feb. 24/09	4300 Bathurst St
Benayon, Abraham	Feb. 23/09	3174 Bathurst St
Anklewicz, Helen	Feb. 23/09	35 Hove St
Stal, Reuven	Feb. 23/09	
Ninio, Aron	Feb. 24/09	7420 Bathurst St
Florence, Albert	Feb. 24/09	3560 Bathurst St
Green, Edward	Feb. 25/09	4415 Bathurst St
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On Campus

Jewish students face incidents at U of T, Queen's

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) came and went last week, but not without incidents at Queen's University and the University of Toronto.

At U of T, there was a physical altercation involving a Jewish U of T alumnus at an IAW lecture, and at Queen's University, students in one course were forced to go through a mock security checkpoint set up by IAW organizers on their way into class.

On March 3, U of T alumnus Isaac Apter attended an IAW lecture with some friends. A friend sitting next to him asked one of the speakers to address problems with Hamas' charter. Apter said that when the speaker dodged the question, he and others began to shout, "Answer the question."

Apter said a man that he assumes was acting as an usher for Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) "grabbed and squeezed the back of my neck and growled at me from about 10 inches in front of my face, 'You shut the f--- up!'"

Apter said the man was wearing a bulletproof vest and a leather jacket.

"It may sound like I'm trying to exaggerate, but these guys were very, very intimidating-looking," he said.

"When someone might have raised their voice out of turn, for example to shout, 'Answer the question,' they would lean over to you and say, 'This is your first warning.'" Apter added.

"When the guy actually grabbed my neck, one of the other event organizers pulled him away from me," he said.

"When I waved the [U of T] police to come in and I was pointing at the guy, saying, 'That's the guy,' they sort of ran into a corner to talk about it and they looked really nervous."

Apter said he formally reported the incident to a U of T special constable who was on the scene.

U of T spokesperson Robert Steiner said that while the university has a policy that encourages room bookers to have their own ushers to help maintain order in the room, "the policy very specifically states that any security matters, including physical restraint, which you can read as even touching someone, is absolutely not within the realm of an usher and is only for U of T police."

When Steiner spoke to The CJN last week, he said he was still gathering information about the incident, but he added that "if it turns out that this did happen the way that [Apter] is describing… there will be some significant implications for a group that is allowing this to happen."

Steiner said that U of T administrators met with SAIA the following day "to send a clear message that whatever may have happened… whether it did happen last night or not, can't happen. It just cannot happen."

Steiner added that while plainclothes U of T police officers were at the event, he couldn't imagine that the man who grabbed Apter was one of them, because that's not how U of T police operate.

"They are very experienced in crowd control. The normal policy in the event of a disruption is [that] they would call for the event to be delayed for a moment to deal with the disruption if it's serious enough, or they might ask an individual, before it got to that point, politely to leave," he said. "But they don't grab someone by the neck and say, 'Shut the f--- up.'"

Apter agreed with Steiner's assessment. "I'm absolutely certain this guy wasn't U of T police.'.. The police don't do that. They just keep an eye out."

Apter said he would follow up with Sam D'Angelo, the U of T police operations manager. D'Angelo did not respond to a request for an interview.

Meanwhile, Josh Zelikovitz, president of Hillel at Queen's, said he is communicating with his school's administration about students' complaints.

"An issue we've been having is with professors setting up fake checkpoints outside of their classrooms at the request of Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights [SPHR] and forcing the students to go through these. We've been speaking to the university about this," Zelikovitz said.

He said that in one instance, students didn't have the option of not going to their Gender and Diversity class, because there was an assignment due that day.

"Once inside, students had a 25-minute presentation from SPHR, a slide show that was obviously completely one-sided and the professor discussed it for a while after."

Continued on page 29

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Profs, students counter Israeli Apartheid Week

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

As Israeli Apartheid Week was being held on a number of Canadian campuses last week, university administrations across the country were being urged by Jewish students and faculty to put a stop to the intimidation and hostility that pro-Israel students are facing.

Shalom Lappin, a professor of computational linguistics at King's College in London, England, and a visiting professor at the University of Toronto, said he was invited to give a talk at York University on March 25 but declined "in light of the York administration's handling of the attack on Jewish students that took place on the afternoon of Feb. 11."

Lappin was referring to an incident involving a group of some 100 anti-Israel protesters who barricaded Jewish students in York's Hillel lounge and shouted anti-Semitic and anti-Israel slurs. In a letter to York President Mamdouh Shoukri on Feb. 25, Lappin said he was upset there was "no public statement by any university official on this incident, beyond the expression of an intention to investigate it…

"The fact that the university has not taken up this assault with the students who launched it, nor acted to reassure the students who they targeted indicates a severe failure on the part of the administration to fulfil its responsibility to sustain a campus free of physical violence and harassment," Lappin wrote.

Speaking to The CJN more than a week after he sent the letter and three weeks after the Feb. 11 incident, Lappin said he had not received a response from the administration.

"Even-handed comments that have come out from the administration are laudable, but none of them address the issue at hand," he said.

He added that Shoukri's address to the university's senate on Feb. 26 "indicates that there is a serious failure of moral courage on the part of the administration and their unwillingness to deal with the situation on campus."

Noah Kochman

Lappin, who said he has frequently spoken out publicly against the policies of the Israeli government, added that "it's fine to criticize Israel and it's fine to criticize any other government… as long as it's done in a civil and courteous way, and this wasn't the case."

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Hillel of Greater Toronto, the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA), Canadian Jewish Congress, Hasbara Fellowships and the Canadian Centre for Israel Activism (CCIA) joined Lappin in criticizing York's response to the ongoing hostilities on campus.

In a statement, the groups urged the university to take disciplinary measures against the people who barricaded students in York's Hillel lounge on Feb. 11.

The groups also said they hope to beef up student security by working closely with Toronto police, providing training sessions for Jewish students, garnering public support from elected representatives, and putting pressure on York donors to urge the administration to act on behalf of students.

The statement went on to call on the administration to "waive a requirement that affected students must first file a formal complaint. York is significantly behind in processing complaints."

On March 5, York released a statement that referred to the "incident in the student centre" on Feb. 11.

Vice-president of students Robert Tiffin said that "given the very serious allegations of intimidation that have been received by the university, three separate investigations are underway against the individuals identified in three complaints. These investigations are being conducted through a local adjudicator under the processes identified in the Student Code of Conduct."

Daniel Ferman, Hillel at York president, said that "while the York acknowledgement of an investigation provides us with a measure of satisfaction, we are dismayed that it took the administration this long to acknowledge the incident. The statement also falls short by not recognizing that Jewish students were specifically targeted."

Another professor, Edward Vrscay, of the University of Waterloo's applied mathematics department, protested Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), which ran from March 1 to 8, by refusing to give a talk to Ryerson University's math department on March 19.

In a letter to Ryerson's mathematics chair, Sebastian Fernando, Vrscay wrote that while he was not boycotting Ryerson – one of the campuses that allows IAW events – and while the math department at Ryerson is "removed" from the week-long lecture series, "enough is enough as far as… Israel-bashing is concerned."

In an effort to counter negative and sometimes untrue messages being disseminated on Canadian campuses, pro-Israel students have started a campaign called Peace on Campus, said Noah Kochman, the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students' Israel affairs chair.

Jewish students involved with groups such as Hillel, Hasbara, CCIA, and Zionists at U of T are behind a website, Peaceoncampus.ca, that posts videos showing examples of the hostility that pro-Israel students face on campus.

"But this isn't a Jewish issue… this is an issue that can spread to the targeting of any ethnicity," Kochman said.

Continued on page 29

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York fines pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian groups

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

York University handed down fines and suspensions last week to Jewish, Tamil and pro-Palestinian campus groups for their involvement in rallies that the university said disrupted classes adjacent to the Vari Hall rotunda on Feb. 11 and 12.

The four campus organizations and their respective penalties are Hasbara Fellowship, which was fined a total of $1,250 and had its operations suspended for 30 days; Students Against Israeli Apartheid, suspended for 30 days and fined $1,250; the Tamil Students Association, suspended for 15 days and fined $650, and Hillel, which was fined $650 but not suspended.

"One of the key agreements these clubs made was not to disrupt classes with their activities. In recent weeks, all of the clubs named have gone back on those agreements," said Robert Tiffin, York's vice-president of students, in a statement last week. "York's 50,000 students have a right to learn without their classes being interrupted by the activities of other students."

Suspended clubs won't be permitted to book university facilities during their suspension period, the university said.

In response to the sanctions, Daniel Ferman, president of Hillel at York, said the fines were handed down "arbitrarily and unfairly."

Aaron Rosenberg, Hasbara at York's co-president, added that the university's "inability" to enforce its student code of conduct is the cause of "the current climate" on campus.

"To fine students for taking a stand against intimidation and harassment while ignoring the larger issues on campus is unacceptable," he said.

'Must be no impediment to free access'

Continued from page 26

Patrick Deane, Queen's vice-principal academic, said "students have the right to attend class without restraints, and they also have the right to choose whether or not they take part in any political debate, presentation, or enactment.

"It has been stressed to all faculty that there must be no coercion and no impediment to free access. We have clearly stated that it must be made clear to all that this is an illustration, and students must not feel that that they are obliged to pass through a 'checkpoint' if they do not wish to do so."

Deane added that, for the most part, the rules were followed last week, but "faculty officials" are addressing the incidents that violated those guidelines.

Zelikovitz spoke about a related incident at Queen's. He said a Jewish campus group called Israel on Campus put together a campaign to bring in pro-Israel speakers and distribute pro-Israel material to debunk claims being made by IAW organizers.

"One of the things they distributed was a National Post article deconstructing the myths and lies of the allegations of apartheid," he said.

A student found that on one of the sheets, someone had written, "Don't support the Israeli government," and had drawn swastikas all over it.

"In my opinion, this is just an isolated incident… I don't think it's coming from the upper echelons of the organizations running the [IAW] events, but I do think it is a symptom of the toxic environment that Israeli Apartheid Week creates on campus," he said.

'IAW singles out one state'

Continued from page 28

The first video was posted on March 3, and within 72 hours, it had been viewed more than 12,000 times. Another video was posted March 5.

Kochman said he hopes the videos will open people's eyes and will push administrators to work to end all forms of racism. He said students have also been distributing printed material countering IAW claims, and some have attended workshops by Jewish community groups to prepare themselves to counter anti-Israel speakers.

Pro-Israel speakers have also been invited by CIJA's National Jewish Campus Life group and its university outreach committee to speak to students.

The situation has caught the attention of Liberal party leader Michael Ignatieff, who met with B'nai Brith's national president Joe Bogoroch last week to discuss the issue.

In a March 5 column in the National Post, Ignatieff also added his voice to those condemning IAW. He wrote that IAW "betrays the values of mutual respect that Canada has always promoted" and that calling Israel an apartheid state is a deliberate attempt to undermine the legitimacy of the Jewish state.

"IAW singles out one state, its citizens and its supporters for condemnation and exclusion, and it targets institutions and individuals because of what and who they are – Israeli and Jewish… It leaves Jewish and Israeli students wary of expressing their opinions, for fear of intimidation."

Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney said he was saddened by the "divisiveness" of IAW events and urged students "to reflect on whether these activities are beneficial or are simply an effort to cloak hatred and intolerance in an outward appearance of 'intellectual inquiry.'"

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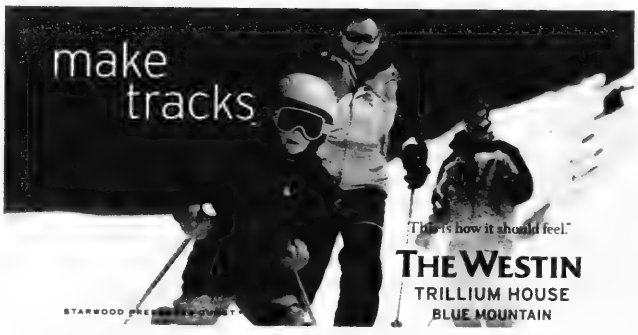

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Coast to Coast

Quebec court fines comedian $75,000 for defamation

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — Controversial French comedian Dieudonné was ordered by a Quebec court to pay $75,000 to French-Jewish singer and actor Patrick Bruel for making damaging statements about him.

During an interview shown on Télé-Québec in 2006, Dieudonné alleged that Bruel is such a strong supporter of the Israeli army that its killing of Palestinian children in the 2006 war in southern Lebanon was "normal" for him and that he is an "ultra-Zionist" with a "superiority complex."

In 2007, Bruel (whose real last name is Benguigui) sued Dieudonné (whose full name is Dieudonné M'Bala M'Bala) for defamation and sought $175,000 in damages, citing repeated attacks against him by Dieudonné that have hurt his reputation.

Dieudonné never responded to the lawsuit, filed in Quebec Superior Court, and was found liable by default.

Judge Danièle Besner, however, reduced the damages, citing the fact that the show was aired only once on Nov. 29, 2006, on the program Francs-tireurs on Télé-Québec, the provincially owned broadcaster.

The producer decided not to repeat it, but the episode was posted online on YouTube and has received tens of thousands of hits.

In the Francs-tireurs interview, conducted by Richard Martineau in Paris, Dieudonné said that Bruel "actively supports" the Israeli army, including financially. He added that Bruel is "practically an Israeli soldier. So when they bomb southern Lebanon and they kill Palestinian children, for him, it's normal."

Elsewhere, Dieudonné described Bruel as "a product of this ultra-Zionist political system, he's a super-militant... He has the superiority complex of certain Israelis."

Noting that Bruel is also a champion poker player, Dieudonné described him as a "liar who always lies to his public."

Dieudonné has been criminally charged several times in France for his remarks about Jews and the Holocaust, although he has been acquitted on appeal in each case.

Despite his notoriety, Dieudonné nevertheless remains a popular entertainer in Quebec and has presented several stand-up comedy shows here in the past few years.

Dieudonné's remarks on Télé-Québec were made soon after Bruel appeared on the Radio-Canada TV program Tout le monde en parle, where he said he did not understand why Quebecers like Dieudonné so much, given the multiple times he has been sued for anti-Semitic remarks in France.

Bruel has said he would turn over any damages he received in this suit to charity.

Cotler calls Bashir arrest warrant 'historic'

Compiled by CJN Staff

OTTAWA — Liberal MP Irwin Cotler called the International Criminal Court's (ICC) decision last week to issue an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir as "a historic judgment."

"The ICC's decision demonstrates that there will be no immunity – even for a sitting head of state – for the commission of horrific war crimes and crimes against humanity, including in this instance murder, torture, rape, extermination, forcible transfer and the pillaging of villages," said Cotler, a former justice minister who is the Liberals' special counsel on human rights and international justice.

"The ICC has struck a blow against the culture of impunity that has been reigning in Darfur since the killing fields began six years ago. Its decision to call President al-Bashir to account affords justice and vindication for the victims."

Cotler, who is also chair of the Save Darfur Parliamentary Coalition, underscored the importance of enforcing the court's order now that the arrest warrant has been issued.

"What is important now is for the international community to ensure that this arrest warrant is in fact enforced through joint support and action by the United Nations Security Council – which originally referred the matter to the ICC – and the co-operation of the African Union and member states of the international community," he said.

"Moreover, members within the ruling National Congress Party must finally distance themselves from President al-Bashir, surrender him to the court, and pursue a peace process both with respect to Darfur and with respect to the North-South comprehensive peace agreement."

Canada, he added, as one of the founders of the ICC treaty and the architect of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine – which includes the responsibility to prosecute – has an important role to promote respect for the court's decision, to ensure that al-Bashir is brought to justice, and to take a stand against impunity.

חדשה בקנדה

נינה שנהב

"הם רוצים שאתחיל לעבוד ביום שני הבא! זה נס!" אני קוראת בהתרגשות לעבר מאיר, כשאני מנתקת את שיחת הטלפון המרגשת. "אני הולכת ללמד בני-נוער עיתונות. איך לראיין, לכתוב, וגם איך לאייר קומיקס!"

אני כל כך נירגשת. מאיר נירגש לא פחות ממני. "ברצינות?" הוא מחבק אותי בחום. "סוף סוף יכנס משהו לחשבון הבנק!" הוא קורא בחדווה. "מה?" אני שואלת עדיין מהובקת. "הם דיברו איתך על משכורת, לא?" הוא שואל. אני מתרחקת מעט מחיבוקו. "זה אה...בחינם. כלומר בהתנדבות. לא ישלמו לי." אני מבאירה. הוא ממשיך לחבק אותי, ייאמר לזכותו.

מאיר חוזר לטגן צ'יפסים בקדרות מה. "ואיפה מתחולל ה...נס הזה?" שואל. "בדאון טאון. אתה תסיע אותי נכון?" מתברר שלא נכון.

אני קצת מודאגת. אצטרך להיעזר בסאב-ווי ובאוטובוסים. "אל תדאגי." מאיר מניח על הצלחת שלי מנה יפה ומסוננת. "את בסך הכל צריכה ללמוד מסלול הלוך וחזור אחד. זה הכל. את תסתדרי."

ביום שני בבוקר, אני ניצבת לי נאה ומרוגשת בתחנת האוטובוס. כעבור שלושים ושבע דקות המתנה בקור ובשלג, מגיע האוטובוס ומביא אותי לאוטובוס נוסף. עשרים דקות נוספות, ואני מגרדת גלידי קרח מלחיי בכניסה לתחנת הסאב-ווי. השוב שתדעו שזו הפעם השנייה שלי בחיים בתחנת סאב-ווי. אין לי מושג מה עושים עכשיו, ואיפה לעזאזל כל הרכבת! אני פונה לסיינית הביבה ושואלת איך מגיעים לכתובת שנתנו לי. היא מורה לי לרדת במדרגות, אלא שהמדרגות אליהן אני מגיעה נעות רק כלפי מעלה, לכיוון השמיים, ואני, עם כל הכבוד, עדיין לא מעוניינת לבקר שם. בסופו של דבר אני למטה, רואה רכבת. השאלה איזו רכבת. אני עולה עליה. אין את מי לשאול כלום.

הקהדים התת קרקעים הם זן דומם. כולם עם אוזניות.

אחרי מספר תחנות, אני מבחינה שאף אחד מהשמות של התחנות לא מוכר מהפתק שמאיר רשם לי. אפריקני אחד בלי מוסיקה, מורה לי בלי שום סנטימנטים לרדת מיד מהרכבת, ולעלות על הרכבת לכיוון הנגדי. מבוישת מאוד, אני יורדת.

חמשת אלפים איש על הרציף, ואני מרגישה לבד לגמרי.

אני שוב שואלת, הפעם הדית נירוטית שמצביעה על כיוון כלשהו, ואומרת לי דברים לא ברורים. אני עולה כמה קומות ועוברת שער מסתובב ליציאה.

מה קורה? איפה אני? מי אני? למה אני?

כרטיסן מנומס אבל עצבני, מסביר לי שצריך לשלם עוד פעם.

אני נמצאת בעולם אפל ומרושע.

שוב יורדת, רואה מיליון אנשים ממהרים, ממהרת איתם. שוב עולה על איזו רכבת אלמונית. בחור קוריאני חייכן לצערינו לא מבין מה אני רוצה. אנו ניפרדים בידידות, והרכבת נוסעת. אני מוצאת בלונדינית, אבל האנגלית שלי מסתבכת לגמרי. אתם מבינים, כשאני מדברת אל סינים או אל פקיסטנים, האנגלית שלי בסדר. אבל, שלא נדע, כשאני נתקלת בקנדי מבטן ומלידה שהאנגלית שוטפת בגרונו, אני מסתבכת מרוב חוסר בטחון עצמי.

איכשהו, אחרי שמונים שעות, אני יורדת מהרכבת, חוששת מוות לצאת מהיציאה ולקבל נזיפות מהכרטיסן, מגיעה, עולה לרחוב ומתקשרת למאיר (מתחת לאדמה, גם אין זכות קיום לקשר משפחתי טלפוני, הוי הבדידות). אחרי בכי קל, אני מתנחמת בדבריו המרגיעים: "יהו, מתוקה. מעכשיו את יודעת את הדרך. הלוך וחזור זה הכל."

המעסיק כבר ממתין לי במשרד. "הסטודנטים מחכים לך, נינה." הוא אומר ומושיט לעברי פתק מודפס. "כאן רשומות כל הכתובות אליהן תגיעי. בכל יום את מתנדבת במקום אחר. אבל תוכלי להגיע לכל מקום בסאב-וי או באוטובוסים, כך שאת מסודרת. נכון יופי!" אני מודה לו בדמעות. בהמון דמעות.

לתגובות באנגלית או בעברית: nina.shenhav@gmail.com

'Thoughts and prayers with the family'

Continued from page 1

"We [continue to] advise Canadians to exercise security measures when travelling to tourist areas, and be as careful as they would in any large city," he told The CJN.

In a press release, Alina Ianson, executive director of CHW in Montreal, said that the organization's "leadership and staff are focused on Terry's speedy recovery. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family at this time."

She said that in the interim, according to CHW's national constitution, Marla Dan, first vice-president, has assumed the role of acting national president of CHW.

Immediate past president Sandy Martin called Schwarzfeld, a past executive director of Ottawa's Agudath Israel Synagogue who became Hadassah president in November, a visionary and a people person. "She is well-respected from coast to coast and in Israel. She is a positive person, and I have faith that God will be on her side."

Toby Yan, an honorary national vice-president of CHW, said the whole community is shocked and upset about the incident. "Terry has a wide circle of friends who care about her, and about 30 women attended an [impromptu] prayer service when she arrived back in Ottawa."

Sharon Sattin, a past national officer of CHW, said that Schwarzfeld is a dedicated leader "who has done so much, and still has so much potential. Because of her strength, I think she will come out of this."

Canadian Jewish Congress co-president Rabbi Reuven Bulka, senior rabbi at Ottawa's Congregation Machzikei Hadas, condemned the attack and said that "Terry is a cherished member of the Ottawa Jewish community and a life-long activist for human rights and human dignity for all.

"We pray for her speedy and complete recovery and extend our deepest support and best wishes to Terry's family and our sisters at Hadassah-WIZO at this trying time. We call on Barbadian authorities to investigate this cowardly crime with all due speed and resources, and bring the perpetrator to justice."

PASSOVER FOOD FOR CUBA: Len Rudner, Canadian Jewish Congress' Ontario regional director and Leanne Campbell, a campaign associate with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, load Passover supplies to be shipped to Cuba, which has a Jewish population of more than 540 Jewish families, as part of the organizations' Maot Chittin Program.

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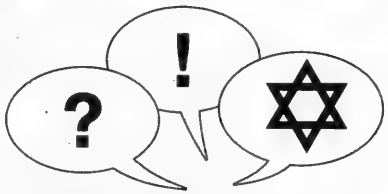
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Shul arranges to send Purim baskets to IDF soldiers

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Herzlia-Adas Yeshurun Synagogue brought a taste of Purim to soldiers in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) by providing mishloach manot baskets for them.

On Feb. 25 and 26, children from both the synagogue and Ohr Hatorah Day School decorated cards and wrote notes of encouragement and appreciation to accompany the mishloach manot baskets that will be sent to the IDF soldiers through an Israeli organization called Connections Israel.

"To order a basket only costs $15 dollars, and our members have been calling in to order them. So far [two weeks before Purim], we've received 23 orders. Connections Israel will prepare and deliver the baskets to the IDF on Purim," said Rabbi Ari Ellis, whose synagogue has a membership of about 100 families.

"Although I never served in the IDF myself, I have a lot of friends that have served in the army, so I thought this would be a nice thing to do, especially after the latest war in Gaza. I'm sure the soldiers appreciate this gesture of goodwill," said Rabbi Ellis, who lived in Efrat in Israel before coming to Winnipeg in 2008.

"I can just imagine an IDF soldier getting a package and a card from someone in Winnipeg and thinking to himself: Where is this Winnipeg?" he added with a smile.

Tikvah Ellis, the rabbi's wife, said, "It's a great way to let soldiers know that we are thinking about them, and it's also a way of injecting a little money into the Israeli economy."

Synagogue member Rose Aziman said her two granddaughters were eager to make the cards, and this was "a good way to encourage them to feel personally involved with the soldiers."

After the Purim baskets are distributed, Connections Israel will send the synagogue a special commendation from the Israeli army and a picture of the IDF unit that received the gift baskets. The photo will be displayed in the synagogue.

Connections Israel was founded in 1998 as an independent, educational, not-for-profit organization that strengthens Jewish identity while unifying the Jewish People. It provides educational, hands-on projects to Jewish communities, schools, synagogues and camps around the world that enable participants to show support for various populations and places in Israel. This year marks its 11th annual Purim drive.

"The organization has also done a lot of things in the Israeli border town of Sderot," Rabbi Ellis noted. "The staff are volunteers or work there part time, and 90 per cent of the donations go to people, not to overhead."

"It's possible that next year we can do this program together with some other organizations in the community here, so more people will know about it. We can build on the program," Tikvah Ellis said.

"Anyone who didn't place their order on time with us can go onto the Internet at www.connectionsisrael.com and order the Purim baskets directly," Rabbi Ellis said.

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רעדאַגירט פֿון: אַלעק סילווער

דערהאַלטן אַ נייַ בוך אין ייִדיש

פֿון אַלעק סילווער

עס איז מיט גרויס פֿאַרגעניגן צו לאָזן וויסן דעם ייִדישן ליטעראַרישן עולם, אַז מיט עטלעכע וואָכן צוריק האָב איך דערהאַלטן אַ נייַ בוך געשריבן אין דער ייִדישער שפּראַך, וואָס איז ביים היינטיקן טאָג אַ גרויסע זעלטנהייט. אויך איז דאָס בוך געדרוקט געווארן טאָקע אין קאַנאַדע, אין מאָנטרעאַל. דאָס בוך האָט 182 זייטן, שיין אַרויסגעגעבן און צוזאַמענגעשטעלט מיט לייענענגעראַ אותיות. עס פֿאַרמאָגט פֿאַרזיצע און פֿראַגע אין איז צום געשמאַק פֿון יעדן לייענער.

דאָס בוך טראָגט דעם נאָמען „אין שפּיגל פֿון דער וועלט" און איז געשריבן פֿון דער פֿיל־באַקאַנטער דיכטערין און שרייבערין גרויסע סלוצקי־קאַהן פֿון מאָנטרעאַל. זי איז אַ פֿראַליפֿישע שרייבערין און דיכטערין, וואָס האָט שוין אַרויסגענעבן אַ צאָל ביכער. אירע שאַפֿונגען זיינען געווען געדרוקט אין דעם „פֿאָרווערטס", „אַלגעמיינער זשורנאַל", „די ייִדישע שטימע" (פֿוילן) און אין אַ צאָל אַנדערע ייִדישע אויסגאַבעס איבער דער וועלט.

אין איר בוך האָט זי אַ וויידמונג צו חיזיל סלוצקי־גרלד ע"ה. איך וויייס נישט ווער די פֿערזאָן איז, נאָר וועג איך קען האָבן מיין אויסוואָל, וואָלט איך דאָס בוך געווידמעט טאָקע איר אַליין, צו גרונג, צוליב דער אַנערקענונג, וואָס זי דאַרף באַקומען, ווייל עס וועט איצט 25 יאָר ווי זי האָט אַנגעהויבן שרייבן אין דער ייִדישער שפּראַך. זי האָט געשריבן און שרייבט נאָך עד היום אין אַנדערע שפּראַכן, וועלכע וועלן געדרוקט אין דער רוסישער פֿאָרעם.

אירע ייִדיש שאַפֿונגען און ביכער האָבן שטענדיק אַרויסגעבראַנגט פֿאַזיטיווע און לעבנסודערע אָפּרופֿן פֿון באַרימטע שרייבער און ליטעראַטור קריטיקער. זי האָט אויך געווונען עטלעכע פֿרעמיעס, אייניק איז פֿאַר דעם ליד „ירושלים", וואָס איז באַקאַנט געווארן איבער דער וועלט.

עס איז מיר געפֿעלן דער נאָמען פֿון בוך „אין שפּיגל פֿון דער וועלט". עס וווייזט באַלד אַרויס, אַז גרונג איז נישט פֿון די, וואָס קוקן אין אַ שפּיגל און זענען נאָר זיך אַליין. זי זעט אוך וויל זען די גאַנצע וועלט אוך פֿאַר דעם דאַרף מען האָבן אַ וועלט־שפּיגל, וואָס זאָל וויייזן, וואָס עס קומט פֿאַר אין אַנדערע טיילן פֿון אונדזער קאָסמאָס. וועג דער שפּיגל איז פֿלאַך, בלויז גלאַט און באַשמירט מיט סילווער אויף דער צווייטער זייט, וויייזן מיר דאָך, אַז מען קען נישט זען ווי זיך אַליין אוך אַ קליינע סביבה אַרום דיר. וועג מען קוקט אַבער „אין שפּיגל פֿון דער. וועלט" וועט דער „איך" ווי פֿאַרשוווינדן אוך עס באַווייזן זיך אימאַזשן, גוטע אוך שלעכטע, פֿריילעכע אוך אומגעטיקע, שוידערלעכע אוך גרויזאַמע מיט אַ סך קרבנות, וועגן וועלכע מען קען נאָר לייענען אַדער זען אויף דער טעלעוויזיע. „אין שפּיגל פֿון דער וועלט" קומען אַרויס די בילדער ווי מען קען זיין נאָר פֿאַרשטעלן, וועג מען קען זען די גאַנצע וועלט אין אייַן שפּיגל.

דאָס בוך נעמט אַריין סיי פֿאַזיזע, סיי פֿראָזע, אמתע זכרונות פֿון דער פֿאַרגאַנגענהייט אוך אַ ביסעלע הומאָר. זי האָלט זיך אַבער נאָמנט צו דער שוואָה אוך ווידמעט אַ סך שאַפֿונגען צו אָט דער גרויזאַמער נע־שעניש. נאָך אַזוי פֿיל יאָרן בענקט זי נאָך איר מאַמעלע וועמען זי ווידמעט אַ צאָל פֿאַטעטישע שאַפֿונגען.

דאָס בוך איז וועדט צו געפֿינען זיך אין יעדער ייִדישער שטוב, ווו גוטע ייִדישע ליטעראַטור איז ביים היינטיקן טאָג אַ נויטוענדיקייט צו שטאַרקן אונדזער מאַמע־לשון.

And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Jerusalem world music band's T.O. appearance dedicated to Gilad Schalit

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

If you're in the mood for some live music this weekend, and you're into African, reggae, Moroccan, Israeli-style, upbeat klezmer funk, you're in luck because Aharit Hayamim, a Jerusalem-based band, is on tour and set to make its Toronto debut on Sunday night.

Aharit Hayamim, roughly translated from Hebrew to "end of days," – a biblical reference to Jacob's conversation with his sons about the end of days – will perform on March 15 at Six Degrees Nightclub, in uptown Toronto, to help local Jewish groups, including Hillel of Greater Toronto, the Association for the Soldiers of Israel and The House, raise awareness and push for the release of Gilad Schalit, an Israeli soldier who was kidnapped by Hamas in 2006.

The band, which has often been referred to as a "grassroots movement," is best known in Israel for its impromptu street performances around the country, the Aharit Hayamim music festival out of which the band was born, and the message of "redemption and light" the band members promote.

The festival was founded in 1994 by Yehuda Leuchter, Aharit Hayamim's leader, as a tribute to his late father, Emil.

"The festival started in honour of my father who passed away 15 or 16 years ago and he was a musician himself," Leuchter said.

Emil was an American-born musician who played with Shlomo Carlebach and the Diaspora Yeshiva Band.

"The festival basically started in my mom's backyard. We started it the year before he passed away. All of his musician friends came and had a party for him and then he passed away. A year later, everyone showed up again, and it just grew," he said, adding that today, the two-day festival attracts thousands of chassidic, secular, hippie and artsy music lovers to Gush Etzion in Yesha to see some of Israel's most popular musicians, such as Ehud Banai.

But this weekend, Torontonians have an opportunity to experience a band that has already garnered a loyal following in Israel.

"At the end of the shows, people come up to us and tell us it was great and they get high from it," Leuchter, 30, said as he prepared at his Jerusalem home for his North American tour.

Aharit Hayamim band leader Yehuda Leuchter, second from right, said he wants to "spread the light of Jerusalem in every home" during the band's visit to Toronto.

Aharit Hayamim achieves a unique, eclectic sound by reflecting the diverse backgrounds of each band member.

"I get high, also, but I'm onstage so I don't know about the high that they get. I get high myself – without smoking or anything."

Leuchter said the band, which is influenced by the 18th-century chassidic Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, who started a movement by combining Kabbalah study with Torah study, has a simple message: "We believe in Israel and we believe in God... We try to bring the light. We come from Jerusalem and Jerusalem is the light. We don't have to say so much, we just have to be."

Leuchter's free-spirited nature is reflected in the way the band manages itself.

"We do street performances, we play pubs, we play weddings, we play everything... We only know the day before where we're going to be at night. We just travel, you know," he said.

"We play in the streets and people like it. We're giving it to the people, we're not just playing on stages and selling tickets. They like it. It's real."

Just as interesting as Aharit Hayamim's philosophy is the diversity of the band members themselves, which contributes to the group's eclectic sound.

"Most of the band is from the Diaspora. I was born in Jerusalem. The drummer is the father of the guitarist, and they come from Reunion Island near Madagascar. The bassist's sister is married to the guitarist, and he comes from the [United] States. The saxophonist is from France," Leuchter said, adding that they all now reside in Jerusalem.

"Basically, the music is very unique. I can't really describe it. It's great, though."

Some of the instruments that they use to achieve their unique sound are shofars, Irish flutes and African drums.

"Because each band member comes from a different place, we play African, reggae, Moroccan, Israeli-style, upbeat klezmer funk."

Leuchter said that he has a couple of goals for his visit to Toronto, where Aharit Hayamim will perform a show dedicated to raising awareness about Schalit, who has been held captive for more than two years.

"I hope when we come back, he's going to be home already. I think it is a mitzvah to do anything you can to bring [soldiers] back, so even though it is not our main mission, it is still our mission," Leuchter said.

"My goal is to come into each and every home [in Toronto] and say, 'Hi from Jerusalem.' I want to come with my music and spread the light of Jerusalem in every home."

To hear Aharit Hayamim's music, look the band up on Facebook or visit www.myspace.com/aharithayamim.

For concert tickets, call 647-899-0071.

CHECK OUT OUR BLOG @ HEEBONICS.CA

Travel Feature

Dead Sea spa treatments good for body and soul

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

EIN BOKEK, Israel — Years ago in my student backpacking days, I visited Masada and the Dead Sea on a budget.

I stayed in an un-airconditioned youth hostel, which does not exist anymore, and I recall making a room selection based on the absence of scorpions under the bed. I climbed the snake path that wound its way up to the Herodian fortress, and I floated in the Dead Sea – proving that even a sinker like myself could bob around on the surface given the water's 33 per cent saline content (the oceans have three per cent). I even recall barely concealing a condescending chuckle when I saw two otherworldly figures, caked in mud, waddle down to the Salt Sea to take the therapeutic waters.

That was then. My salad days behind me, during a recent visit to the same corner of the Dead Sea as a guest of the Israel Government Tourism Office, it was – gasp! – me who resembled that freakish mud-caked apparition I witnessed back in my younger days. During a late February visit to the Dead Sea, I signed up for the mud-pack treatment at the Daniel Dead Sea Resort & Spa, one of several high-end hotels that together make up a Palm Springs-like community along the western shore of the Dead Sea, at 1,200 feet below sea level, the lowest point on the surface of the earth.

Magnesium-rich mud provides relief for skin ailments.

With a bewildering variety of treatments available to choose from, I selected the mud wrap with seaweed – the latter to draw out the nasty energies we keep inside us, according to the attendant who booked my appointment. I could have selected a reflexology treatment, a medical pedicure, hot-stone treatment, aromatherapy, milk bath, hot-seaweed wrap or an anti-stress body-peeling treatment, among other options. Klaudio was the Argentine oleh who provided the treatment.

The hotel was a real smorgasbord of international talent. The kippah-clad doorman/security guy was originally from Mumbai, India; one of the front-desk people was a young black girl whose parents were originally from Chicago. Almost all of them ride the buses from Arad or Dimona to work each day.

Visitors come from all around the world to the Dead Sea for treatments, mostly in the spring and fall, Klaudio said. The area's mineral-rich mud, loaded with magnesium, is renowned for its healing properties, particularly for skin diseases such as psoriasis. Guests spend weeks, even months, at the spa, and some countries subsidize the visits as a legitimate medical expense.

After providing me with a boy bikini that folded to the size of a peanut, Klaudio retired to heat the mud. He returned with a metal bucket that could have held paving mix, but instead was full of the gooey concoction that has made the region famous. He first applied the mud to my back, and after an initial jolt from the heat, it quickly became pleasantly warm. As I lay back, he ladled more mud on my chest, stomach and legs and shmeared it around.

After covering me from neck to toe in mud, he placed big globs of the stuff under my palms and then wrapped me in plastic that left me looking, I imagine, like a chocolatey Vietnamese salad roll.

After turning down the light and adjusting the volume of the electronic relaxation music, Klaudio left, with the advice to relax.

The mud felt surprisingly pleasant on my skin, the music was soothing, and I nodded in and out of consciousness.

At the end of the treatment, I showered in the treatment room – anywhere else would leave a muddy mess everywhere – donned a new tiny boy bikini and bathrobe and headed to another room for a 30-minute Swedish massage. (I'd have gone for the full hour, but I wasn't sure my boss would accept it as a legitimate expense.)

Aaahh. Feel the tension of being on an all-expense-paid junket fade to the background.

Ooooh. Let go of those difficult decisions of whether to choose fish or meat tonight.

Yeaaah. See those nasty energies the attendant warned me about evaporate at the tip of the massage therapist's expert fingers.

Yes, a massage can do wonders for tired muscles and knots.

The spa treatment over, guests can continue to relax in one of the Daniel's many pools. One is filled with warm water from the Dead Sea. Another smaller pool features bath-temperature water with a strong waterfall in one corner, a third is a good-sized whirlpool. There's also a sulphur pool, apparently good for those suffering joint ailments, as well as a cold water pool.

Nearby are a Turkish bath, wet steamroom and a dry sauna, and showers to rinse off.

As if the man-made treatments aren't beneficial enough, according to the U.S. National Psoriasis Foundation, high levels of bromine in the air at the Dead Sea "seem to add to a patient's sense of well-being."

True enough. But will my boss sign off on the mud pack and massage treatment expenses? Oh, the tension, the knots in my shoulders. Better head back to the Daniel for one more treatment before I go.

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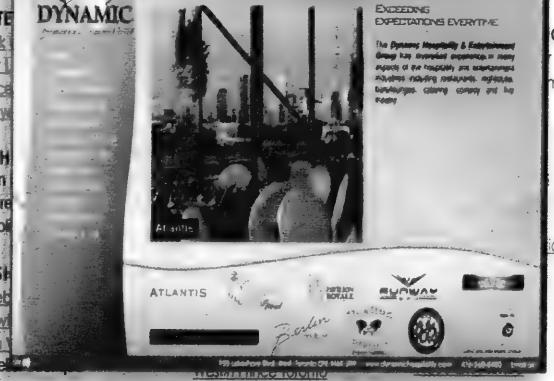

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No real peace before Palestinian situation resolved: Assad

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JERUSALEM — Syrian President Bashar Assad told a Gulf newspaper on Monday that Damascus will negotiate with any Israeli government irrespective of its political orientation, adding that there is little difference between the political left and the right.

"One is bad and the other is awful," the Syrian leader told the United Arab Emirates daily Al Khaleej, adding that Arab states should not hang their hopes on the ideological makeup of the Israeli cabinet.

"The right-wing is right-wing, and the left-wing is right-wing," Assad said. "The right kills Arabs and the left kills Arabs. There is no value to all of these hopes."

He said that a peace deal with Israel was possible, but that normal relations would be possible only if Israel ended its conflict with the Palestinians.

"There will perhaps be an embassy and formalities, but if you want peace, then it has to be comprehensive. We give them the choice between comprehensive peace and a peace agreement, which does not have any real value on the ground," Assad said.

"There is a difference between a peace agreement and peace itself. A peace agreement is a piece of paper you sign. This does not mean trade and normal relations, or borders, or otherwise.

"Our people will not accept that, especially since there are half a million Palestinians in our country whose position remains unresolved. It is impossible under these terms to have peace in the natural sense."

Syria and Israel held indirect talks last year under Turkish mediation. Talks focused on the Golan Heights, which Israel captured in a 1967 Middle East war and on Syria's relationship with Iran, Hamas and the Lebanese Hezbollah group.

Syria is demanding that Israel commit to a withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Golan. The indirect talks, put on hold due to the resignation of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert last September, were disrupted further after the recent Israeli war in Gaza.

U.S. Senator John Kerry, chairman of the U.S. Senate foreign relations committee, said after a meeting with Assad in Damascus last month that Syria was prepared to resume the talks but wanted U.S. participation.

Assad said that it was in the Palestinians' interests to co-ordinate with Damascus over its peace talks with Israel, to avoid Israel putting off a resolution with the Palestinians.

"We believe that if Israel signs [a peace agreement] with Syria, Israel will put away the Palestinian question."

Egypt was the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel, but it is often described as a cold peace since relations extend little beyond official government contacts.

Iran capable of nukes: Israel

JTA

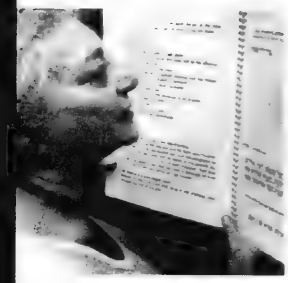
JERUSALEM — Israel's military intelligence chief said that Iran is now capable of creating an atomic bomb.

Iranian state-run television reported Sunday that the military had test-fired a long-range missile, though the Fars News Agency said it was an anti-ship air-to-surface missile.

Amos Yadlin told Israel's cabinet Sunday that "Iran has crossed the technological threshold. Reaching a military-grade nuclear capability is a question of synchronizing its strategy with the production of a nuclear bomb."

Yadlin said that Iran is showing an interest in talking with the West to buy time to produce a nuclear weapon.

Mohammad Ali Jafari, the commander-in-chief of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, said that Iranian missiles can target Israeli nuclear sites.



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'We will stay until Gilad's return'

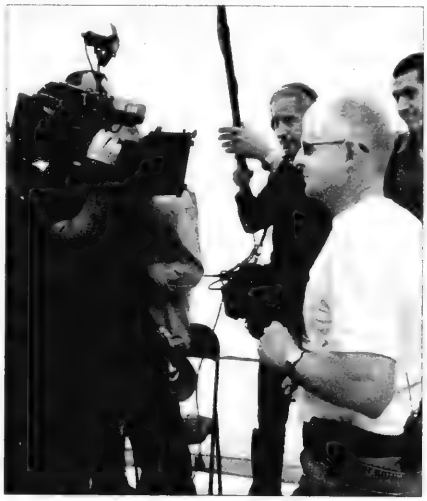
Continued from page 1

Gilad Schalit was abducted by Gaza militants in a 2006 cross-border raid. In return for his release, Hamas, which rules in the Gaza Strip, has demanded the release of hundreds of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons.

"We will stay in the [protest] tent until the end of Olmert's term, or until Gilad returns," Noam Schalit said on Sunday in an interview with Army Radio from the protest tent in Jerusalem.

Last weekend, Olmert criticized the public demonstrations urging Schalit's release, claiming that the advocacy campaign is encouraging Hamas to harden its position in negotiations.

Schalit's father addressed remarks made previously by Olmert, who insisted that mass protests for Gilad Schalit were undermining efforts to secure his release, saying that "the prime minister mainly tells us what we can't do, but we don't see him doing anything that yields any kind of result."



Noam Schalit speaks to the media in the protest tent outside the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem.
[Israel photo]

He added that he is examining the situation using the "results test," and the outcome is that Gilad is still exactly where he was in 2006.

"It's not reasonable that the State of Israel, with all its resources and its long arm, can't manage to bring back an abducted Israeli soldier," Schalit said.

"We're not telling the government to do this or that," he continued. "I don't give advice over the radio, nor do I give recipes to the prime minister– let him do what he must. But we're here, and we're not moving from here."

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Israel Briefs

Third bulldozer attack

A bulldozer driver overturned a police car and rammed a bus in Jerusalem in an apparent terrorist attack before being shot. Two police officers were slightly injured in the attack last Thursday, Israel Police said. Police and a cab driver shot the bulldozer driver, who was identified by Israeli media as a 26-year-old Palestinian resident of eastern Jerusalem. He died of his wounds. The driver also reportedly tried to flip over cars near the Malha Mall. Last July, a Palestinian from eastern Jerusalem used a bulldozer in downtown Jerusalem to kill three and injure dozens. Two weeks later, 24 people were injured in a similar attack.

Examining Pope Pius' record

Yad Vashem will co-operate with a Catholic study institute to evaluate research on Pope Pius XII's role during the Holocaust. Scholars from Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research were to have met this week with scholars from the Jerusalem-based Studium Theologicum Salesianum to evaluate the controversial pope's wartime record. The meeting was being held "to understand the present state of research on the man and the topic, and is an opportunity for an exchange of updated knowledge and a sharing of scholarly opinions," a statement from Yad Vashem said. Many historians have accused Pius of turning a blind eye to Jewish suffering during the Holocaust, while the Vatican and other historians assert that Pius worked behind the scenes to save Jews. Yad Vashem in particular has come under criticism for an exhibit caption that ascribes "silence and the absence of guidelines" during the Holocaust to Pius. The meeting comes amid preparations for a visit to Israel in May by Pope Benedict XVI that will include a stop at Yad Vashem. It also comes amid an ongoing process promoting the beatification of Pius and after a report last week that the Vatican produced a 1943 document to bolster its assertion that Pope Pius XII worked behind the scenes to save Jews during World War II.

U.K. cancels embassy move

The British Embassy in Israel called off a move to new offices in Tel Aviv because the building's owner is involved in West Bank construction. The building is partly owned by the Africa-Israel Investments Ltd. real estate company; a subsidiary of the firm owned by Israeli billionaire Lev Leviev that has built homes in three West Bank communities. Leviev recently settled in Britain. The British Embassy received documents from Africa-Israel Investments a week ago detailing its activities in the West Bank. Based on that information, the embassy decided not to rent the property. A lease had not been signed. The planned move was announced a year ago. After media coverage of the move, as well as the activities of the company, pro-Palestinian groups began protesting the British foreign office.

Britain's new Hezbollah policy

The British government said it will re-establish contact with Hezbollah. Britain had halted all contact with the Lebanese Shiite militia four years ago. Canada, the United States and Israel consider it a terrorist group. The British government announced it would resume contacts with Hezbollah's political wing. The announcement came on the heels of a visit by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to Washington, D.C., and British officials said the move was discussed in advance with the Obama administration. A statement from the British Foreign Ministry said the government had "reconsidered our position on no contact with Hezbollah in light of more positive recent political developments in Lebanon" – notably, the participation of Hezbollah in the formation of a national unity government in Lebanon.

Mauritania expels envoy

The Foreign Ministry said it had closed its embassy in Mauritania after the government of this overwhelmingly Muslim West African nation asked the Israeli ambassador and his staff to leave. The move came after Mauritania's military junta recalled its own ambassador from Israel last month due to the campaign against Hamas in Gaza.

- Files from JTA and Ha'aretz

Rabbinical court ombudsman rebukes judge's ruling

By CNAAN LIPSHSITZ
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Jerusalem's rabbinic court erred and overstepped its authority last year when it retroactively declared that the converted, Canadian-Israeli son of prominent Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim is a non-Jew, the court's ombudsman ruled earlier this month.

Eliezer Goldberg, the former Supreme Court justice and state comptroller who monitors rabbinic court activity, rejected the ruling made in August 2008 by Jerusalem rabbinic judge Yissachar Dov Hagar regarding Yossi Fackenheim, the 30-year-old son of the late Holocaust survivor, esteemed theologian and Reform rabbi.

Hagar – who was reviewing Yossi Fackenheim's divorce from his former wife; Iris, unexpectedly declared that he "was not and had never been Jewish," despite the man's haredi conversion in Canada at the age of two. Therefore, the judge concluded, there was no need for a formal *get*, or divorce document.

The couple married in 2001 in Jerusalem in a ceremony conducted by Israel's Chief Rabbinate, which years earlier had approved the conversion he underwent with his mother in Toronto, prior to the family immigrating to Israel in 1984.

In his complaint to Goldberg, Fackenheim – who has no children – said a simple divorce had "unnecessarily turned into a humiliating expulsion" from the Jewish people. "The judge also made derogatory remarks about my profession," Fackenheim – an actor studying for his master's degree at London University – told Ha'aretz. "I came completely unprepared and didn't think for one minute I'd walk out with a document expelling me from my people."

Rabbi Hagar nullified the conversion after learning that Fackenheim did not go to synagogue often or observe Halachah, the Jewish religious code. The rabbinic court administration later defended the ruling as justified.

In his letter of rebuke, obtained by Anglo File, Goldberg wrote: "These are offensive and rude statements that do not befit the status of a rabbinic judge or a judicial institution of the state." He added he would have taken disciplinary action against the judge in question if it were not for the man's imminent retirement.

"Goldberg's rebuke is a positive development," Fackenheim said, "but I'm not sure how much it will help me in my struggle with the religious establishment to have that judge's ruling reversed."

In parallel to lodging the complaint against Hagar with Goldberg, Fackenheim is also fighting to have Hagar's retroactive decision overturned with the help of the Israel Religious Action Center, the legal arm of the Reform movement in Israel, whose leadership defines the case as both "crucial and alarming."

Einat Horowitz, the attorney the action centre has appointed to handle the case, said that "rabbinic judges may consider Goldberg's rebuke, but are not bound to it." She added that she would file a petition to the High Court of Justice on Fackenheim's behalf within a few weeks. "Yossi Fackenheim's status is not clear right now," she said. "He has one document from a rabbinic judge saying he's not Jewish. If he wishes to get married again, no rabbi will be able to wed him."

After the Holocaust, Yossi Fackenheim's father, Emil Fackenheim, who served in Canada as a Reform rabbi, spoke of the "614th commandment," a concept alleging that "to despair of the God of Israel is to continue Adolf Hitler's work."

Emil Fackenheim, who died in 2003, believed Jews had an obligation to observe their faith and frustrate Hitler's goal of eliminating Judaism.

> ***'Case highlights the current chaos within the rabbinic court system on the issue of conversions'***

The Yossi Fackenheim case is unique in two aspects, according to U.S.-born Rabbi Seth Farber, head of ITIM, a non-profit organization that helps Israelis navigate the Chief Rabbinate bureaucracy. "We often handle cases in which the Israeli Rabbinate's conversions tribunal fails to recognize conversions performed abroad," he said. "This case is different and unprecedented in that the rabbinic court nullified a conversion the court itself had already approved."

The second aspect, according to Farber, is the judge's questioning Fackenheim's Jewishness without being asked, is contrary to past practice. "This case, which began as a simple divorce, highlights the current chaos within the rabbinic court system on the issue of conversions," he said.

Rabbi Eric Yoffie, the leader of the U.S. Jewish Reform movement, said that Fackenheim's case "has sent shock waves in the Reform community."

David Ellenson, the president of Hebrew Union College, recalled the retroactive nullification last year of thousands of conversions performed by the state-sponsored Conversion Authority headed by Rabbi Haim Druckman. "That Jewish identity can be revoked means an erosion of the certainty that each of us can have in our faith," he said.

Hod Hasharon's chief Ashkenazi rabbi, Reuven Hiller – who is an outspoken critic of the Reform movement – also voiced harsh opposition to retroactive nullification of conversions. "I wholeheartedly object to such rulings," he said. "This is an extreme view that has no place in Judaism, and its recent emergence is very regrettable. In the past, the hardline haredi establishment fought against the nullifying conversions at all price. Now we see a complete reversal, which shouldn't be allowed to happen."

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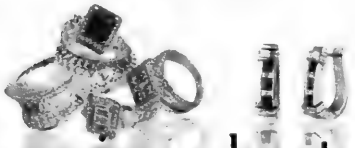

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Series explores how religion shapes current affairs

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Canadian broadcast journalist Martin Himel, based in Israel since the 1980s, has produced an ambitious 13-part Vision TV documentary series on religious faith.

Twist of Faith focuses on how religion shapes current events and how current events affect belief.

Three of the segments deal directly with Judaism and Israel, while a fourth touches on the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Religion and Conflict, scheduled to be broadcast on March 16 at 10 p.m., turns, in part, on the Palestinian town of Bethlehem and its historic Church of Nativity.

Although Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, is supposed to be a symbol of peace, it is caught in the pincers of Israel's struggle with the Palestinians.

Due to a spate of suicide bombings that took place in neighbouring Jerusalem during the second intifadah, Israel sealed off Bethlehem with a high concrete wall. Himel briefly examines the suffocating effect it has had on Bethlehem and interviews an Israeli police officer who lost his legs in such a bombing.

His most effective interview is with a Palestinian shopkeeper, who says wearily, "We have to remember we're all human beings."

In this episode, Himel also examines the conflict between Christians and Muslims in Kosovo and Shiite-Sunni tensions since the flight of 750,000 Iraqi refugees to Jordan.

The Future of Judaism, to be televised on April 13 at 10 p.m., unfolds in Israel, New York City and Toronto.

In Israel, Himel profiles a strictly Orthodox American immigrant family that gathers strength and direction from the certainty and continuity of Orthodoxy.

He contrasts their restrictive lifestyle with that of Israeli secular Jews, but spends far too little time fleshing out this important theme.

Moving on to the United States, Himel talks to a rabbi on the Lower East Side who says that Israel does not fortify Jewish identity, to the owner of a famous delicatessen who makes the case that traditional Jewish delicacies bring Jews closer to Judaism, and to a fashion designer whose garments are influenced by Torah scrolls.

He then turns his attention to an interfaith family in Toronto, saying that such unions are becoming increasingly common.

Himel's conclusion is that Judaism, Orthodoxy aside, is evolving in response to an ever-changing world.

In Marriage and Divorce, to be broadcast on May 4 at 10 p.m., he profiles an observant Israeli Jewish women who feel oppressed by the inordinate power of the rabbinate, which controls marriage and divorce in the Jewish state.

He talks to two young women in Jerusalem who cannot obtain a Jewish divorce, a *get*, because the rabbinic court has sided with their husbands. Both women think they are the victims of a glaring injustice.

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, an Orthodox rabbi who empathizes with their situation, argues that rabbinic courts lack sensitivity and are out of touch with modern realities. Women, he says, should be able to extricate themselves from this intolerable impasse.

The Temple Mount Controversy, the last in Himel's series, to be televised on June 1 at 10 p.m., turns on a pivotal holy site in the heart of Jerusalem, known as the Temple Mount to Jews and the Noble Sanctuary to Muslims. Himel claims that, unless they share it, there will never be peace in the region.

If he is right, both sides are doomed to perpetual conflict.

Jews differ on a lot of issues, he observes, but they agree that the Temple Mount, the locale of the ancient temple, is Judaism's most holy site.

The Temple Mount in Jerusalem

For Muslims, the Noble Sanctuary is associated with the prophet Mohammed's journey to Jerusalem and two buildings bound up with Islam – the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque.

Judging by Himel's interviews, Muslim clerics are particularly adamant over the ownership of the site. The mufti of Jerusalem, a perfect example of unreasonableness, rejects Jewish rights to the Temple Mount and adds that if Jews want peace, they should stay away from it.

He and others claim, without the slightest shred of evidence, that Israeli archeological excavations are damaging the foundations of the Noble Sanctuary.

In closing, Himel interviews a group of high-minded Jews and Arabs who believe that the Temple Mount should be shared. But, as he suggests, they are definitely in a minority.

Charming Israeli film explores love and hate

Dan Katzir's charming made-in-Israel movie, Out for Love, Be Back Shortly, turns on two diametrically opposed forces, love and hate.

Scheduled to be screened by the Jewish Film Society on March 15 at the Al Green Theatre at 4 and 7:30 p.m., the 55-minute film unfolds against the backdrop of a host of events – Israel's peace treaty with Jordan, a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv, a demonstration in protest over former Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's pro-peace policies and Rabin's assassination.

The director, who doubles as the narrator, is an earnest young man in search of companionship and love.

The film opens with a grainy home movie of Katzir's post-bar mitzvah festivities and fades into graphic scenes of Palestinian boys throwing rocks during the first intifadah.

As these brief sequences disappear, Katzir, a former paratrooper, shows up at Dizengoff Square, which, to him, symbolizes freedom.

Katzir, who narrates the film in English, meets a fetching young woman there. Her name is Iris Arieh, and he will meet her again and again.

Returning from his accidental meeting with Iris, Katzir talks to his grandmother. She is busy baking a pie and talking about her late husband, Aaron, a renowned scientist who was killed in a 1972 terrorist attack at Ben-Gurion Airport.

As she grieves for him, she hears on the radio that a bus has been blown up near her apartment in Tel Aviv. She is concerned that her granddaughter, Katzir's sister, may have been on the bus.

"We pay a high price to live in this country," she says solemnly.

After running into Iris again, Katzir wonders when he will have a chance to kiss her. But his romantic longings are soon drowned out by Rabin's murder and his anger over his assassination.

Eventually, Katzir comes to terms with life and learns how to express his emotions, much to Iris' delight.

Out for Love is a delightful confection brimming with youthful romance and the play of current events.

An accompanying Israeli short, The Red Toy, by Dani Rosenberg, charts the fate of a clattering, flashing toy found by a Palestinian boy in a Jerusalem garbage dump.

The toy, tracked by surveillance cameras in the city, gets passed from one hand to another until it lands in the dump yet again.

The exact meaning of The Red Toy is debatable, but it may have something to do with the randomness of life.

In any event, it is certainly a most unusual film.

—S.K.

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Debut novel set in lingerie shop in Boro Park

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Sima's Undergarments for Women unfolds like the relationship between two lovers; from the initial chance encounter to the giddy delights of flirtation and to the heartbreaking trauma of the final goodbye.

But Ilana Stanger-Ross' debut novel is not your ordinary love story. It's about the relationship between a woman in her mid-60s and an Israeli in her 20s.

And it's set in a bra shop.

Sima Goldner owns a lingerie shop in the basement of the home she shares with her husband of 46 years, Lev. It is tucked deep in the Orthodox neighbourhood of Boro Park in Brooklyn, where mothers walk down the street with an army of children in tow.

Sometimes these mothers stop into the shop with their daughters to buy them their first bra, perhaps, or, when they're older, underclothes for their wedding dress.

Sometimes they just drop by to gossip or exchange recipes.

That's pretty much Sima's life up to now, and she's been running her business for so long, she can tell a woman's bra size just with a casual glance. But something is missing. Her marriage is loveless and she has no children of her own.

But Sima's life is transformed overnight when Timna, a beautiful young Israeli woman, walks into her store seemingly to buy underwear but is really looking for work. Seduced by her youth and charm, Sima makes Timna her new seamstress and assistant.

Sima admires Timna's beauty and perfect body, wishing she admired her own body more when she was young. She envies everything about Timna, and we get the impression there is much regret in Sima's life.

Sima quickly becomes enamoured of Timna. Her days at the shop become richer and more joyful. She loves to hear Timna talk about her boyfriend in Israel, Alon, and the way her face lights up when she mentions him.

Like a teenage girl smitten by a boy, Sima talks about Timna non-stop to her best friend, Connie. And like a jilted lover, she becomes possessive over her, frustrated that Timna consumes her whole world, while she is only a small piece of Timna's life. Soon Sima starts to follow Timna after work to find out what she does outside the shop, and she also starts to interfere directly in her life.

The story, told in an easy, conversational style, segues nicely from the present to Sima's past, and we learn that Sima underwent fertility tests shortly after her wedding to determine why she couldn't have children.

Timna becomes the daughter Sima never could have. Like a mother, Sima worries about her all the time and always suspects the worst has happened to her.

The story is told from Sima's point of view, and there is much about Timna we don't know. And some of the things we do know are only conjecture and suspicion on Sima's part. Is she cheating on Alon, for instance? We never do find out. There is a mystery to Timna that the book unfortunately never fully resolves.

But this is Sima's story after all. We are meant to sympathize with her. She wanted nothing more, when she was younger, than to bear children and instead finds herself in a loveless marriage and carrying a secret inside her for 46 years.

But Sima is not without fault, either. She is meddlesome, suffocating even, at times.

Like Sima, Stanger-Ross' debut novel, published by Overlook Press, is not without fault, but there is much to enjoy as well. Because it is set in a women's undergarment store, I am trying really hard to avoid calling this book uplifting.

But it is that and much more.

Ballerinas are rehearsing in Tel Aviv.
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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

A CAPPELLA CHOIR VARSITY JEWS TO SING AT HOLY BLOSSOM

The Varsity Jews, a Jewish a cappella choir at the University of Toronto, is continuing a five-year tradition by performing an upcoming concert for charity – in this case for Te-Amim, a Toronto-based theatre group focusing on tolerance education through the arts.

Te-Amim is the only company in Canada using theatre to look at the history and legacy of the Holocaust as a route to addressing all forms of racism.

The choir boasts 20 members and performs at many events throughout the year. Its repertoire consists of Israeli folk songs and classic rock with a Jewish flavour. Over the past three years, the group has raised a total of $23,000 for charity.

The concert, Shticks and Tones, is being performed in the main sanctuary of Holy Blossom Temple, 1950 Bathurst St., Sunday, March 29, 7:30 p.m. Tickets are $8 to $20 and may be purchased by phone (416-913-2424), at the Wolfond Centre for Jewish Campus Life (36 Harbord St.) or at the door. Reserved "sponsor" tickets are available for $72 for two seats. www.varsityjews.com

* * *

Crazy For You: Scarborough Choral Society's Onstage Productions presents Crazy For You, the **George** and **Ira Gershwin** musical with book by **Ken Ludwig**. Songs include I Can't Be Bothered Now, I Got Rhythm, They Can't Take That Away from Me, But Not for Me, Nice Work If You Can Get It and Someone to Watch Over Me. Now in its 55th year, the group is well-known for its quality productions at a reasonable price (in this case $25 and $10).

Bayview Glenn Upper School Theatre, 85 Moatfield Dr. (York Mills and Don Mills). March 27 & 28, April 3 and 4, 8 p.m. and several matinées. 416-293-3981for cash or cheque ticket orders, 905-717-5808 for Visa/Mastercard orders. www. scarboroughchoral. org.

* * *

Names in the News: Toronto actor **Allan Price**, who has offered Broadway Melody Singalong classes for years, goes to the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton this month to play the wizard in a production of The Wizard of Oz. ("I'm off to *be* the wizard," he quips.) When he returns in early June, he begins rehearsals for The Right Road To Pontypool, being produced by 4th Line Theatre. The play is by **Alex Poch-Goldin** and tells the story of the Toronto Jewish community's summer cottages and resorts in Pontypool, a town near Peterborough. Price also recently played a grandfather in an episode of the new TV series The Listener.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Toronto Jewish Film Society presents Contemporary Israeli Voices, a screening of three short films – The Red Toy, The 74th, and Out For Love, Be Back Shortly. The featured speaker is **Shlomo Schwartzberg**. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. Sunday, March 15. Two screenings, 4 and 7:30 p.m. $15, $10. Rush tickets available 15 minutes before each screening.

• Congregation Shir Libeynu and the Miles Nadal JCC present Purimania: A Grown-up Celebration of the Adventures of Queen Esther. Features the Purim story like you've never heard it before, music by singer-songwriter **Lovaine Cohen**, DJ music, hamentashen and prizes for costumes.

Not recommended for people under 16. $5. Miles Nadal JCC, Saturday, March 14, 8 p.m. Reservations required, 416-465-5488 or shirlibeynu@yahoo.ca. A portion of the proceeds to benefit the Abused Women's Fund, Jewish Family and Child.

• Noah's Great Rainbow, a new Canadian play by **Sam Chaiton**, focuses on the aftershocks of genocide and features Afro-klezmer-rap music performed by **David Buchbinder**, **Waleed Abdulhamid** and **Popo Murigande**. The Showcase Production is directed by **Alon Nashman** and stars **Don Francks** and **Mighty Popo**. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. March 25 to April 3. Public performances $29. 416-924-6211, ext. 0. www. noahsgreatrainbow.com

• Opera York is holding auditions this week for the North American Hebrew language première of "And the Rat Laughed," an opera by Israeli author **Nava Semel** with music by **Ella Milch-Sheriff**. All applicants must be professional opera singers and preferably Hebrew speaking. Send your CV, picture and contact information to laura@operayork.com The opera is to be performed at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts in November. pzilberman@operayork.com, 416-616-5195

* * *

Passages: Jazz violinist **Harvey Tishcoff**, who died last month at the age of 89, was a legend of the Toronto music scene whose talents spanned a wide variety of genres from jazz and big band to classical and pop.

A pioneer of the five-string electric jazz violin, he worked with the legendary **Joe Venuti** and played with **Luciano Pavarotti**, **Tony Bennett**, **Bob Hope** and others. A mainstay of the Jewish music scene for many years, Tishcoff performed with the **Shawn Clifford Trio**, the **Stan Hiltz Orchestra** and the **Nafshenu Orchestra**.

In 2005, at age 85, Tishcoff cut his first and only CD, Legacy. He played his final gig at his grandson's graduation party about two months ago. Tishcoff, who always said that his riches were his family and friends, "has truly left a legacy for Toronto music and his family and friends," said his daughter, **Francine Birken.**

Net worth at separation dictates division of assets

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator for 26 years

Question: I understand that if I was to marry and then divorce, the equity in my present house could be split 50/50 with my wife without a marriage contract. If I were to sell the house before marrying, bank the money, buy a house together with my wife and then divorce, would my wife be entitled to the money in my bank account or only to the house that we bought together?

Answer: The house you bought together is primarily what would be divided. However, depending on her own net worth when you separate, the increase in the value of the money in the bank account — not its value as of the date of marriage — would also be subject to division. If you had $100,000 in the bank and through wise investment it became $200,000 by the time you separated, then the value of the *increase* could be subject to division — not the original $100,000.

Question: I just found out that I am not the biological father of my 10 year old. The father earns over 150K. The mother was his secretary. The mother also continued to work for him while visibly pregnant and went on maternity leave while still employed by him. Also, my son was born with a heart defect and has to be checked yearly by a specialist and will need an operation before he reaches the age of 30. Can I claim back support against the biological father and the mother for the 10 years the biological father and the mother deceived me?

Answer: No, sorry. Under those circumstances you cannot recoup your fatherly support.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

Neither Garfin Zeidenberg LLP nor John Syrtash is liable for any consequences arising from anyone's reliance on this material, which is presented as general information and not as a legal opinion.

Sponsored by Tzivos Hashem Canada, a children's charity. For program information call 416-398-1866.

YOUR EYES: Israeli pop star Ahinoam Nini (Noa), left, and Mira Awad, an Israeli Arab singer and actress, share the stage at the Israeli national TV studio. Awad and Noa were chosen to represent Israel together at the 2009 Eurovision Song Contest. Despite calls by several Arab artists and intellectuals, both Israeli and Palestinian, for the popular Palestinian Christian singer not to participate with Noa, the duo have repeated that they will appear in the contest on May 16 in Moscow. The duo will perform the peace song Your Eyes, which got the most votes in text messages from among four selections the duo performed on state television.

[Israel photo]

Film explores discharged Israeli soldiers' drug abuse in India

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

Israeli director Yoav Shamir's trek to India was not easy. His film Flipping Out took him to India's Himalayas and Goa beaches, where he documented young Israeli military veterans escaping the memories of their army service by turning to drugs.

"The Himalayas were difficult to get to – it's almost impossible to get there by plane and if there's a flight, it's only a 10-seater which hardly flies there – it's very remote," the award-winning filmmaker said from his Tel Aviv home.

To interview his subjects, Shamir travelled 24 hours by bus from Delhi, five hours by jeep and another three hours on foot, a trip he made four times in the two years it took to film the documentary.

The film explores the phenomenon known as "flipping out," which affects about 2,000 former Israeli soldiers yearly who end up needing psychological help when they experience psychotic breakdowns as a result of their drug abuse.

After their compulsory military service, many soldiers see travelling as a rite of passage. They often meet in India at guest houses and resorts where they experience LSD, ecstasy and other hallucinogenic drugs and attend huge all-night raves – parties where drug use is common.

Although the Israeli youths interviewed by Shamir seemed troubled by their military experiences, they laughed it off as the time of their lives. Still, many became drug dependent and vulnerable and ended up needing help.

"In India there are so many Jewish travellers, so Chabad has about 10 houses wherever there is a concentration of Israeli backpackers, providing a place to pray, keep kosher and for Shabbat," Shamir said.

Guy Sahar Russo, a former Israeli elite combat soldier, has been living for the past six years in India.

"Since Chabad is very integrated into travellers' lives and Indian life, when someone gets into trouble with drugs, a lot of the time they [Chabad] will be the first to hear if somebody is in a bad mental condition and they will help out."

But when the Israeli government became aware that Chabad was taking advantage of these young men and trying to have them become more religious, Shamir said the Israeli anti-drug authority established secular "warm houses" to help the young people.

In addition, parents concerned about their child's drug dependency hired former Mossad agent Helik Magnus to "rescue" delusional or dysfunctional youths with dramatic drug interventions. Magnus has returned hundreds of Israelis to their families, including one youth featured in Shamir's film.

Yoav Shamir

After his own military service, Shamir recalls, "I went travelling for three years to South America and India, but I never saw people flipping out from drugs."

Nevertheless, when producer Michael Sharfshtein came to him with the concept for the movie he was intrigued.

"Back in 2005, when my film Five Days was being screened at Toronto's Hot Docs film festival, I pitched the idea of Flipping Out, and the National Film Board was very interested." (The NFB's Kent Martin co-produced Flipping Out.)

Shamir received international acclaim for his award-winning Five Days, which documented the dismantling of Israeli settlements in Gaza, and for Checkpoint, which explored Israeli-Palestinian conflicts at border crossings.

Now that he has completed Flipping Out, Shamir has turned his attention to his latest documentary, Defamation, which explores anti-Semitism.

Defamation premiered last month at the Berlin International Film Festival, and Shamir has plans for its Canadian premiere at the Hot Docs 2009 festival, which begins April 30.

Flipping Out is available on DVD in mid-March at the NFB online store www.nfb.ca. For information on Defamation, visit www.defamation-thefilm.com

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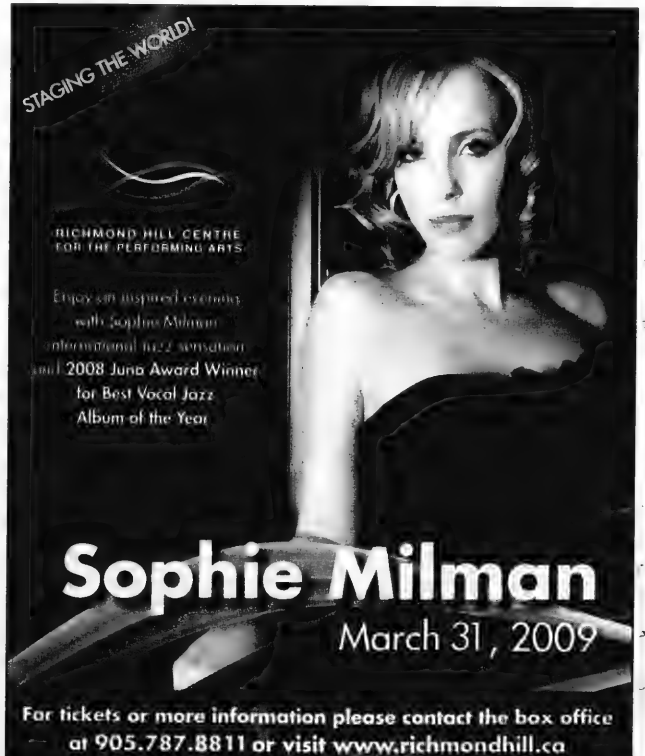
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Publisher brings Judaism to the 'public square of discussion'

By DOROTHY LIPOVENKO
Special to The CJN

When Stuart Matlins, founder of Jewish Lights Publishing (JLP), was recognized for American Jewish Distinguished Service, he invoked the iconic James Cagney.

Standing on the podium nearly three years ago to accept the award from Hebrew Union College, Matlins reached back more than half a century to a line of Cagney dialogue: "Sometimes I believe more in dreams than in statistics."

Stuart Matlins

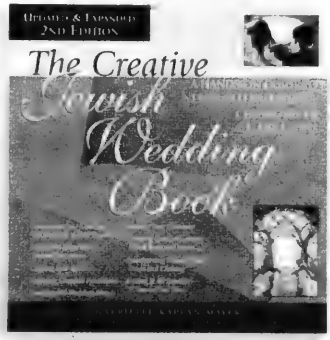
Not long afterward, in 2007, somewhere in the world, someone who speaks English, Italian or one of the numerous languages among JLP's translated editions, bought its two millionth book. That number was no dream.

In describing how and why he founded a niche Jewish publishing house in the bucolic hills of Vermont – with such diverse titles as to satisfy a spiritual hunger for rabbinic wisdom or a craving for Jewish aliens in outer space – Matlins could well have drawn inspiration from the title of that 1948 Cagney film, The Time of Your Life.

Indeed, this transplant from New York to Woodstock, Vt. (population 3,232), is having the time of his life nourishing readers with Jewish food for body and soul, be it yoga and the aleph bet or the modern man's Torah commentary.

It's a mission for him, publishing as "outreach" to other Jews, those who go to bookstores, not to shuls, "to share with them the relevance of Judaism to their lives."

Making a midlife move to a village and operating Jewish Lights from a converted dairy barn might suggest that the 68-year-old entrepreneur has come full circle, returning to the Polish shtetl roots that his family left in 1902 to cross the ocean to America.



And as in the shtetl, parnassah (business) and kavanah (intent when we pray) aren't far from each other. Step out the front door of Jewish Lights and it's just three or so miles to the country shul that Matlins and his wife, Antoinette, founded 25 years ago, when they traded Manhattan's go-go for the Green Mountain State's slow-mo.

But Matlins didn't settle in Woodstock to publish books. The former managing partner for the consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton was still seeing clients when he took a successful stab at refreshing and reissuing a book on gemstones that his wife had authored.

Then, as these stories go, Matlins happened to be attending a Jewish summer study retreat when an acquaintance put a bug in his ear. That bug concerned the out-of-print books of Lawrence Kushner, an American rabbi known for his writings on spirituality and mysticism. Would Matlins consider adopting the orphaned titles that could still attract readership?

Initially, he brushed off the suggestion. But the prospect soon took shape as Matlins became convinced of the books' potential market – Conservative, Reform and non-affiliated Jews he felt were underserved in publishing circles.

His target audience, particularly those with ID tags from the consciousness-raising 1960s, were increasingly curious about Judaism's approach to the issues of poverty and social justice. And their interests dovetailed with the growing tikkun olam (repair the world) movement that was inspiring many to greater involvement in Jewish community life.

"No one [outside of publishing targeted at the Orthodox] was focusing on creating a body of inspirational literature and resources based on the Jewish wisdom tradition to help people lead a Jewish life," Matlins said in a telephone interview.

And the difficulty of staying connected Jewishly in a small town had its own unexpected benefit. "Had we not moved to Woodstock, we never would have understood the need for the kinds of books we publish."

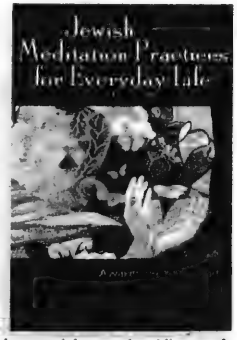
What began in 1990 as a modest venture headquartered in the guest house on his property quickly outstripped its space and staff. Within two years, Jewish Lights had moved to offices in a converted old dairy barn in town, and has since added 8,000 square feet of warehouse in nearby Windsor, Vt.

That "town square" location suits a company that aims to bring Judaism, as Matlins puts it, into the "public square of discussion" on contemporary issues.

To that end, one can find among JLP's 260 titles Jewish ethics and social justice, Judaism and ecology, even spirituality in the workplace. With theology as its guide, the publisher can go just about anywhere in the Jewish galaxy of life-cycle events and tradition, from texts on baby-naming to restoring spiritual meaning to the bar mitzvah.

While it's mostly Jews who buy the books, about one-third of readers are Christian or of other faiths, drawn to themes both Jewish and non-denominational, such as the illustrated God's Paintbrush for young children. And while Matlins is a regular at Jewish book fairs, he can also be found at the annual trade show of Christian religious booksellers in the United States.

That cross-cultural interest is reflected globally, too: more than a dozen languages, including Hindi, Portuguese and French, are represented among the JLP texts in translation. One that's made it into 14 languages, including Korean, is The Empty Chair, a compendium of aphorisms from the long-dead Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.



(How Empty Chair found its way to Woodstock is a story with twists and turns that Matlins relishes recounting: initially, he turned down a chassidic group's request to distribute its books, but subsequently, a chance encounter with a haunting Breslover melody while on a trip to Jerusalem kindled his interest.)

Although Jewish Lights releases mostly non-fiction, it does have a playful side. Under its imprint, one can find two first-rate short story anthologies of Jewish-themed crime fiction, Mystery Midrash and Criminal Kabbalah. For readers who like to orbit the fantasy-science fiction shelves, there are two compendiums of the genre, Wandering Stars and More Wandering Stars, while graphic novel enthusiasts can enjoy the Rabbi Harvey adventure series set in the Wild West. (Harvey is especially popular in France.)

Matlins will keep expanding JLP's range. Because in accepting the award from Hebrew Union College, he not only spoke of dreams and statistics, he also quoted from Ecclesiastes 12:12: "Of making many books there is no end…"

The website address is www.jewishlights.com

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Israel & the Jewish World

Our missiles can hit Israel: Iran

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JERUSALEM — Iranian missiles can reach Israeli nuclear sites, a top Iranian military commander said last week, amid persistent speculation that Israel could target facilities involved in Iran's atomic work.

"All the nuclear facilities in different parts of the land under the occupation of the Zionist regime are in the reach of Iran's missile defences," the commander-in-chief of the Revolutionary Guards, Mohammad Ali Jafari, said, according to Iran's ISNA news agency.

Iranian officials often refer to Israel's government, which Tehran does not recognize, as the "Zionist regime."

Last month, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that Iran would welcome talks with the United States – but only if there was mutual respect. Iranian officials have said that means the United States has to stop accusing Iran of seeking to build nuclear weapons and supporting terrorism, charges Tehran has denied.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
[RNS/Reuters photo]

Ahmadinejad recently urged the United States to change its "satanic" ways if it is serious about wanting change.

"Change means giving up your satanic, coercive and aggressive ways and instead adopting more human morals… If you accept this invitation, it will be to the benefit of yourself and your nation," Ahmadinejad told a crowd in northwestern Iran. He did not mention Barack Obama by name but was clearly referring to the new U.S. president's administration.

Those demands could help explain why U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in a visit to Jerusalem that Obama's attempts to reach out to Iran have so far been unsuccessful. She reassured her Israeli hosts that U.S. diplomacy should not be confused with softness, saying Washington remained committed to preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and funding terrorism.

Meanwhile last week, Iran's top authority said that Obama was pursuing the same "wrong path" as former U.S. president George W. Bush in supporting Israel, which he called a "cancerous tumour."

The comments by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say on policy in the Islamic Republic, are likely to disappoint the new U.S. administration, which wants to engage Iran but has called on Tehran to "unclench its fist."

"Even the new president of America, who has come to power with slogans about changing Bush's policies, is defending state terrorism by talking about unconditional commitment to Israel's security," Khamenei said.

Iran is one of the most important political and financial supporters of Hamas, which the United States and many European countries consider a terrorist group.

Hamas' most powerful official in Gaza, Mahmoud Zahar, attended a recent conference in Tehran, and Iranian state television said Tehran would focus on how to provide assistance to the Palestinians.

The United States has long called on Iran to end its opposition to peace-making in the Middle East and to stop supporting organizations such as Lebanon's Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas group that Washington considers terrorists.

Iran says these groups are fighting an illegal occupation on Palestinian land and does not recognize Israel's right to exist.

One Iranian analyst said Khamenei may be restating Iran's tough line to make clear Tehran would not easily give up regional policies that could be bargaining chips in any talks.

"He is saying, 'You also have to change if you want us to change,'" said the analyst, who asked not be named. "Iran cannot afford letting go of its regional policies. It cannot happen that easily."

Breaking with Bush, Obama's administration has talked of engaging with Iran on a range of issues, including its disputed nuclear ambitions. But a senior U.S. official said last week that it is doubtful Iran will respond to any offers of engagement when they are made.

Ultimately, any decision will depend on Khamenei, who has so far not directly addressed the issue of Obama's overtures, but has in the past said U.S. governments could not be trusted.

"Another big mistake is to say that the only way to save the Palestinian nation is by negotiations," Khamenei said.

"Negotiations with whom? With an occupying and bullying regime, who does not believe in any other principle other than force?… Or negotiations with America and Britain, who committed the biggest sin in creating and supporting this cancerous tumor… ?" he added.

"The way to salvation [for Palestinians] is standing firm and resisting," the supreme leader said.

Khamenei also said the Holocaust, in which six million Jews died at the hands of the Nazis, was used to "usurp" Palestinian land and said the West and Israel show the weakness of their cause by not allowing anyone to question the Holocaust.

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Jewish ballplayers tune up at spring training

By HARVEY ROSEN
Special to The CJN

WINNIPEG — Spring is a time of renewal – especially for the aspiring ballplayers who recently reported to 16 spring training sites in Florida and another 14 in Arizona. Among them you can find enough Jewish players to at least form a minyan.

Boston Red Sox first sacker Kevin Youkilis enjoyed a banner season in 2008, and in January, management showed their appreciation by giving the Cincinnati native, who turns 30 this month, a four-year, $41-million (all figures US) contract extension.

The 6'1, 220-pound slugger batted .312, whacked 29 homers and drove in 115 runs last year. He added 43 doubles, and as a result of his stellar performance, Youkilis won the American League Hank Aaron Award for best offensive performance of the year.

And he can field, too. He holds the major league record of 238 straight games at first base without an error, a streak that ended last June.

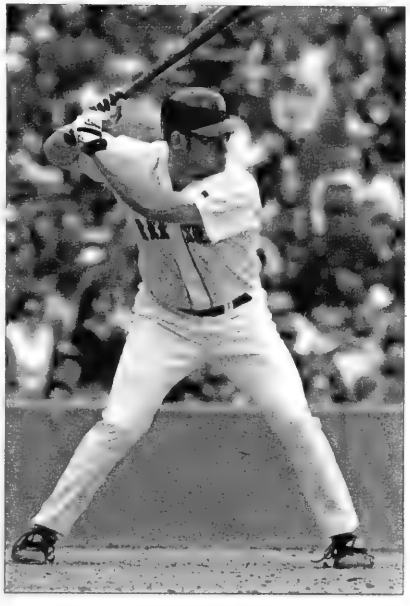
Ryan Braun of the Brewers, the son of an Israeli father, chosen the fifth player overall in the 2005 Major League baseball draft, is in the second year of an eight-year pact with Milwaukee. Small wonder his club locked him up for so long a stretch, since he has helped turn the franchise around.

Described as a future perennial all star, Braun, 25, who was 2007 rookie of the year in the National League, batted .285 in 2008, hit 37 homers and drove in 106 runs. Due to his defensive shortcomings, Braun was switched from third base to the outfield last season and adapted well to his new position.

Texas Rangers' second sacker Ian Kinsler, 26, excelled in 2008, hitting .319 along with 18 homers and 71 RBIs to go along with 41 doubles. He also stole 26 bases and was voted to the Major League all-star team. The son of a Jewish father played his last game on Aug. 17, when an MRI revealed a sports hernia injury that required surgery.

In early January, the Colorado Rockies added depth to their rotation, acquiring durable right-hander Jason Marquis, 30, from the Chicago Cubs. The former Brave and Cardinal had an 11-9 record with a 4.53 ERA in 2008. The Jewish hurler, described as a workhorse, has had double-digit wins in each of the last five seasons, surpassing 190 innings four times. An added bonus is that for a pitcher he's a more-than-decent hitter, managing five homers and 40 RBIs in his nine-year career. The almost $10-million-a-year athlete is on occasion summoned as a pinch hitter.

Solid reserve outfielder, Gabe Kapler, 33, has found a new home. In 2007 the fitness buff retired and took a managerial job in the minors. Deciding that he could still play at the major league level, he signed a one-year pact with Milwaukee in 2008. Coming off the bench – in only 229 at bats – he hit .301, with eight homers and 38 RBIs.



Boston's Kevin Youkilis

Kapler's season ended in September when he tore a muscle in his right shoulder after making a hard throw to the plate. Again in demand as a spare part, Kapler, a lifetime .273 hitter, signed a one-year pact for $1 million with the Tampa Bay Rays in January.

Also on the move is veteran catcher Brad Ausmus, who turns 40 in April. He has caught more than 1,800 games in the majors and will act as a backup receiver and mentor this year for the Los Angeles Dodgers, who signed him as a free agent to a one-year pact.

Last season, Ausmus completed his 10th year with the Houston Astros. A .251 lifetime hitter, Ausmus hit .218 to go along with three homers and 24 RBIs. His strength is his ability to call a game and handle pitchers well. There are few ball clubs who won't offer Ausmus a coaching job when he retires.

Relief pitcher Josh Grabow, 30, enjoyed a banner season in 2008 with a poor Pittsburgh Pirates team. The left-hander had an impressive 6-3 record and an ERA of 2.84 in 74 appearances. The Arcadia, Calif. native, who stands 6'2 and weighs 250 pounds, is heading into his eighth season. He has a fastball in the low 90s, a strong change-up and curve, and works well with runners in scoring position.

Hawaii-born pitcher Scott Feldman, 26, of the Texas Rangers can start or relieve. Last season, he went 6-8 with an inflated ERA of 5.29 in 25 starts. In 151 innings, he managed only 74 strikeouts and walked too many batters. At 6'5 and 210 pounds, he is a formidable figure on the mound and gives right-handed batters fits due to his unorthodox delivery.

Left-handed reliever Craig Breslow, 28, already has the label of a journeyman hurler. Now with the Minnesota Twins after being claimed off waivers last May from Cleveland, he has also played with Boston and San Diego. Last year he fashioned a 0-2 record but with a sparkling ERA of 1.91 in 49 appearances. Craig is a decent strikeout artist, but sometimes gets himself into difficulty with an occasional lack of control. The New Haven, Conn., hurler is especially tough on left-handed batters.

Watch also for 26-year-old Brian Horwitz, an outfielder in camp with the San Francisco Giants, who hit .277 with seven homers and 29 RBI s in only 264 at bats with AAA Fresno, as well as Colorado Rockies right hander Jason Hirsh, 27, who was out most of last year with a strained right shoulder, and right-handed relief pitcher Mike Koplove, 32, who was signed by the Phillies and invited to spring training.

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Straight talk about feeding tubes

By MICHAEL GORDON

The Senior Side of Life

It started with a phone call. "I need your advice about whether or not we should put a feeding tube into my father." It was the mother of one of our children's friends.

"He had a very bad stroke and has recovered and is an acute-care hospital awaiting placement. He can't eat and we have had two conflicting opinions about putting in the tube, and my brother and I don't know what to do."

It is a common scenario, played out in hospitals all over world. Depending on the jurisdiction and the ethno-cultural perspectives or religious views of those involved, the issue can be tilted one way or the other.

For those who subscribe to religions that espouse the sanctity of life, it is almost deemed obligatory to put in a feeding tube (usually called a gastrostomy tube or G-Tube) with the procedure called a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy or PEG.

For those who espouse the quality-of-life perspective, the procedure might be rejected if, in the opinion of the potential recipient or their surrogate, it does not add anything substantially to the patient's quality of life.

There are many individuals who have no fixed personal, religious or cultural dominant view and who are open to considering any medical procedures as long as they know and understand the implications of the proposed treatment.

There are some health-care professionals who have interpreted the medical literature on the subject as an indication that feeding tubes have very little long-term benefit. There are others who contend that although this method of feeding does not achieve its goals in all circumstances, it does maintain life in many who would otherwise succumb to inanition.

I am frequently consulted by families and health-care staff if there is a conflict about inserting a feeding tube when someone can no longer eat, or eat safely, and there is a great deal of reluctance on everyone's part to attempt feeding, even a modified and "safer" diet.

An approach that I take regarding artificial feeding (another term often used for tube feeding) follows along a train of thought that takes into account clinical, personal, cultural, religious and family views.

The clinical question is important, as some conditions are such that there will be progressive deterioration and the feeding tube is merely a stopgap in the process and may not really change the actual course of the disease. In other conditions, the disease could stabilize, and artificial feeding might prolong life for an undefined and sometimes extensive period.

The next issue I consider is what the family believes the person would have wanted if he/she was able to give his/her views on the matter. Often family members who are substitute decision-makers forget or do not understand that their role in decision-making is to reflect what they, in good conscience, believe their loved one would have wanted if he/she could make the decision themselves. The personal view of the decision-maker should not be what governs the decision.

If religious views are held by the patient, they must be interpreted by the surrogate, sometimes with the assistance of religious advisers, to determine what is right in that religion's view.

At the end, a decision has to be made, but it is important to remember that in Canada, decisions such as these can be legally reversed and artificial feeding discontinued if there is reason to believe that it's not the best and most appropriate choice after it is tried for a period of time.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents *(Dundurn Press).*

MISO CHICKEN

CHICKEN:
4 x 4 oz. boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 tsp canola oil

MARINADE:
2 tbls miso paste (buy at grocery store)
1 1/2 tsp light sesame oil
1 1/2 tsp chopped ginger
1 1/2 tsp chopped garlic
1/4 tsp red pepper flakes

Place chicken in a shallow dish. Combine marinade ingredients with 1 tablespoon water; pour over meat. Chill, covered, 1-2 hours. Remove chicken from marinade; drain excess. Heat canola oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook chicken until no longer pink in the center, about 4 min. per side.

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Epi on Education

Seymour Epstein

"You shall not mistreat any widow or orphan. If you do mistreat them, I will heed their outcry." (Exodus 22:21-22)

"Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive." (Deuteronomy 16:20)

The Toronto District School Board has just announced the opening next September of some new alternative, theme-based schools. These are called magnet schools in other jurisdictions, in that they attract a particular segment of parents who are interested in a specific theme. In fact, there have always been thematic schools in the TDSB based on a special interest in arts, sports or a comfort zone for homosexual youth. Soon after the africentric school was announced, another parent group requested a school based on social justice. As my readers might remember, my reaction to the former was that all schools should be "gaia-centric" – that is, all aspects of our cosmos should be treated with equal respect and equal depth.

Now we can jokingly assume that other TDSB schools do not teach social justice, since a special school needs to be established for that purpose. But is it really a joke?

The irony here is that our spiritual tradition first taught the world about the life-critical need to care for the vulnerable, as quoted in Exodus above. It was our spiritual fore-parents who taught us to double the word "justice" so that the entire world would learn how justice alone must be the guiding principle of our daily behaviour.

These are the lessons that our schools teach. These are the reasons our schools are so magnetic that they attract thousands of parents to pay very high tuition fees for a special environment where the richness of our spiritual heritage can be fostered and passed from one generation to the next.

These faith-based schools can't be considered alternative and thematic solely because they are considered private. There is nothing private about the words of the Hebrew Bible. They have been public since first disseminated by the Jewish People. In a province that funds a religious stream that learned its first lessons in social justice from our teachings, it's a shame that other faith-based magnet schools are not part of the public domain.

Epi (Seymour Epstein) is the vice-president of Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

We can all fight anti-Semitism

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

You're back, strident and hostile anti-Semitism. Damn you! Leave us alone! But you won't.

What has lain in the hearts of millions over the centuries is once again being vomited out of the mucky place it lives in. Anti-Semitism hangs like a sword of Damocles over our heads. For those who have never seen anti-Semitism like this before, watch closely. It ignites. Then it spreads like a forest fire travelling at immense speed.

Anti-Semitism, our survivors, God bless them, told us all about you. They were right. Man, you are ugly.

Much is being done to fight anti-Semitism – often called "the longest hatred" – at a senior organizational and government level. Our Jewish student organizations were prepared for Israeli Apartheid Week; B'nai Brith and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto have met with senior administration at York University to argue our case following hooliganism against our Jewish students; CUPE Canada and the Liberal party have come out against the CUPE Ontario ban on Israeli academics' speaking in Ontario. No doubt some inside work was done to help this process along.

Internationally, a conference on anti-Semitism was held in the Houses of Parliament and at Lancaster House in England to devise ways of combating this hatred. Attendees and speakers included MP Irwin Cotler, members of the U.S. Congress and British Foreign Office Minister Lord Malloch Brown.

These are sound strategies – many facets of anti-Semitism need to be fought by governments and through major organizations.

There is, however, a level where anti-Semitism froths and requires a response from individuals, communities and smaller organizations – at the grassroots level, an area we rarely invest in.

For some reason, our leadership has failed to wrap our organizational genius around the development of a solid, multi-tiered, well-financed, broad-based community mobilization strategy ensuring survivors, seamstresses, lawyers, Birthright and March of the Living participants, doctors, truck drivers, rabbis, mothers, teens and professors, are all involved in fighting anti-Semitism.

The only organization offering Jews from every corner of the city a way to battle this haranguing bully as a community "on the ground" is the Jewish Defense League (JDL). It holds regular strategy meetings, has bused Jewish community members to Windsor where CUPE voted, and held a rally during Israel Apartheid Week. The JDL, however, is viewed as controversial by many. The bottom line is that our community and every Jewish neighbourhood around the world desperately need to come together in homes, offices and community centres to give us the chance to talk about our fears, help organize our own personal defence, understand the issues regarding Israel and Judaism, create tools to befriend our non-Jewish allies and more. Let's do so.

Approach our leadership and tell them we need to construct a community mobilization plan, with buy-in from all segments of the community, drawing upon skills from senior and junior members and securing funding for its planning and implementation. Alternatively, e-mail me if you are interested in being part of a grassroots movement.

Jewish communities have rarely developed a community mobilization plan. Leaders of old, such as revisionist Zionist Ze'ev Jabotinsky, yelled for this, but people rarely listened.

My fellow Jews, once again, you and I are not prepared to fight anti-Semitism. It is sui generis, unique to the Jewish people, something only we can understand; therefore, it is you and I who need to battle it. I implore us to do so.

Romans, Greeks, Haman, Ferdinand II and Isabella of Castile, Nazis – this is where anti-Semitism stops. We challenge you.

See my blog http://avrum.net.

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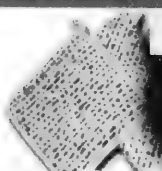
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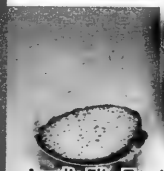
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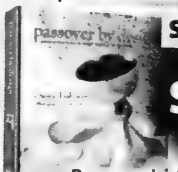
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This Week

National

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper greets members of the audience last week at a Chabad-Lubavitch reception and memorial gathering on Parliament Hill in Ottawa in honour of the victims of the Mumbai attack in India last year. In the background, looking on, is Rabbi Zalman Grossbaum, executive vice-president of Chabad Lubavitch of Ontario. ***[Photo courtesy of the PMO]***

Harper renews call to defeat anti-Semitism

Compiled by CJN staff

OTTAWA — Anti-Semitism is a "a pernicious evil" that must be defeated, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said last week at a Parliament Hill ceremony organized by Chabad Lubavitch to honour Jewish victims of last November's terrorist attacks in Mumbai.

Harper expressed condolences for the murder at the Chabad centre in Mumbai of Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg and his wife Rivka, who were among six people in the building killed during the attacks. Their two-year-old son and his nanny escaped.

The killings were "affronts to the values that unite all civilized people," Harper said, adding that anti-Semitism "is a pernicious evil that must be exposed, that must be confronted, that must be repudiated, whenever and wherever it appears. Fuelled by lies and paranoia, we have learned from history, it is an evil so profound, indeed as we saw in Mumbai, that it is ultimately a threat to us all.

"Under our government, Canada will remain an unyielding defender of Jewish religious freedom, a forceful opponent of anti-Semitism in all of its forms and a staunch supporter of a secure and democratic State of Israel," he said to applause.

Harper described the quick instalment of a new rabbi at the Chabad centre in Mumbai as a signal that the Jewish People will "never bow to violence and hatred. When it comes to standing against hate and intolerance, none have persevered, none have been as resolute as the Jewish People," he said.

Netanyahu, Lieberman, sign deal

© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — Yisrael Beiteinu leader Avigdor Lieberman, whose policies have raised Arab ire and international concern, was designated as foreign minister on Monday in a coalition agreement with Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, who is working to form a governing majority in the Knesset.

The deal with Yisrael Beiteinu, still left Likud short of the majority needed. It also stated that Likud and Yisrael Beiteinu favour the creation of a wide coalition, leaving the door open for centrists to join, and raised the possibility that someone else may become foreign minister if other parties join the coalition.

Likud officials have said a unity government including the middle-of-the-road Kadima party led by the current foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, could help avoid friction with U.S. President Barack Obama, who has pledged to pursue Palestinian statehood.

Benjamin Netanyahu

Lieberman, a native of the former Soviet republic of Moldova, has stirred controversy by advocating the trading of land where many of Israel's 1.5 million Arab citizens live, for settlements in the West Bank in a peace deal with the Palestinians.

Avigdor Lieberman

His agreement with Likud could allow for stripping Israelis of citizenship rights over involvement in what Israel sees as terrorism or espionage.

Continued on page 52

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Is Gilad Schalit's release imminent? – please see page 51

The News in Brief

Canada

Campaign Falls Short

VANCOUVER — The Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver said its 2008 campaign raised $7.2 million, $800,000 short of its goal and $300,000 less than the previous year. Federation CEO Mark Gurvis blamed the economic climate, saying the number of pledges, 3,574, was down from 3,702 in 2007, when $7.5 million was raised. Allocations to beneficiary agencies won't change, and the federation has reduced its operating costs and will look for "additional budget reductions," Gurvis said. The 2008 campaign result marks an end to six straight years of growth, starting in 2002.

Graffiti At York U

TORONTO — Jewish groups at York University say anti-Semitic graffiti found March 11 in a men's washroom in York's student centre shows the campus atmosphere for Jews is "toxic." One message read: "Boycott Israeli Apartheid." Another replied, "Why? So you can help prove that Jews really can get away with whatever they want?" A complaint was filed with security. Hasbara at York president Aaron Rosenberg said there is a "toxic environment" at York for Jewish students, who face regular intimidation and hostility. Hasbarah and Hillel want York president Mamdouh Shoukri to publicly denounce all forms of anti-Semitism on campus.

Complaint Dismissed

WINNIPEG — A human rights complaint against B'nai Brith Canada that grew out of a 2003 conference it hosted in Winnipeg for emergency responders about terrorism has been dismissed by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission after a five-year investigation. The complaint against B'nai Brith was filed by Shahina Siddiqui, executive director of the Islamic Social Service Association of the United States and Canada. It alleged comments made at the meeting were biased against Muslims. Siddiqui didn't attend the conference but relied on reports from unnamed sources.

Hacker In Court

CALGARY — An Israeli computer whiz known as the Analyzer who once hacked into the Pentagon's computers and is now alleged to be part of a multimillion-dollar global hacker ring faces extradition to the United States May 7. Ehud Tanenbaum, 29, was arrested Aug. 28 in Montreal and brought to Calgary to face charges related to a $1.8-million theft from a local financial institution. U.S. authorities allege he's also involved in thefts from hundreds of financial institutions in Europe and elsewhere, a bail hearing heard this month. In 1998, he was sentenced to 15 months in jail in Israel for the Pentagon incident.

Arrest Warrant Issued For Demjanjuk

MUNICH — A Munich court has issued an arrest warrant for alleged Nazi war criminal Ivan Demjanjuk.

After months of investigations, Munich city prosecutors announced March 11 that Demjanjuk, 88, is charged with having been a guard at the Sobibor extermination camp in Poland from March to September 1943, and having been involved in the murder of at least 29,000 Jews.

The prosecutors said a trial would be held in the city's highest court immediately after the retired autoworker's impending extradition to Germany from the United States, where the Ukraine native has lived in suburban Cleveland since 1952. With the U.S. Supreme Court's refusal last summer to bar his extradition, there appears to be no legal obstacle to the elder Demjanjuk standing trial in Germany.

Demjanjuk's son says his father isn't well enough for another trial. He was accused in the early 1980s of being the notorious guard "Ivan the Terrible" at the Treblinka death camp, but he was released from jail in Israel after seven years when, during the appeals process, he could not be identified as "Ivan" beyond a reasonable doubt.

The U.S. Justice Department later said Demjanjuk had been a guard at Sobibor and could be deported because he lied about his Nazi past to obtain U.S. citizenship.

New Republic Sold

WINNIPEG — Facing a debt payment deadline, Canwest Global Communications, controlled by Winnipeg's Asper family, said last week that it has sold the New Republic magazine back to the editor it bought it from in 2007. Terms of the deals weren't disclosed, but analysts say Canwest bought the U.S. political magazine from a group led by editor-in-chief Martin Peretz for $7 million in 2007. Canwest recently sold off its stake in the Score sports channel and hopes to sell five TV stations to raise money.

World

Kidnapping Alleged

BUENOS AIRES — A former prosecutor of the 1994 terrorist bombing of Argentina's AMIA Jewish community centre said he was kidnapped and tortured. Claudio Lifschitz, whose accusations in front of the Argentine Congress about alleged irregularities in the probe eventually led to its collapse, said he was kidnapped March 7 in Buenos Aires. His captors cut and burned the word AMIA on his back and the case number on his arm, he said. On March 5, Lifschitz added a new accusation against an intelligence service official and other former government officials. Lifschitz said the kidnappers said they belonged to Argentina's intelligence agency. Eighty-five people were killed in the attack, allegedly with involvement by Hezbollah, backed by Iran.

Federation Cuts Staff

NEW YORK — America's largest Jewish federation became the latest major organization to downsize in the face of the recession. UJA-Federation of New York, which raised $153 million in its annual campaign last year, said March 11 that it's cutting 52 employees, or about 11 per cent of its staff. The layoffs, along with the elimination of 20 unfilled staff positions and other administrative cuts, will save the federation $7.4 million, it said. So far in 2009, the federation is 10 per cent behind in fundraising pledges and 12 per cent behind on collections. Its $675-million endowment is also 25 per cent smaller.

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Iran not a 'black and white' issue, prof says

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

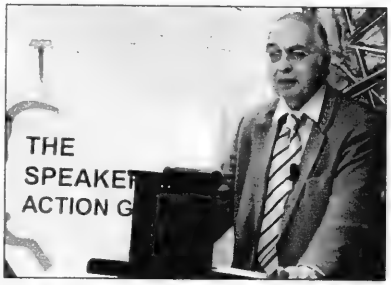
The western world needs to recognize that there's a deepening schism in Iran between its hardline, nuclear-power-obsessed, Islamist theocracy and a burgeoning, liberal, youthful civil society.

So says professor David Menashri, director of the Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University and one of the world's leading authorities on Iran.

In Toronto last week as part of a speaking tour, Menashri, an Iranian Jew, addressed about 100 people at a luncheon lecture organized by the Speakers Action Group and sponsored by Canadian Friends of Tel Aviv University and the Canadian Jewish Civil Rights Association, at downtown law firm Fogler, Rubinoff LLP.

Asked whether Iranians understand the negative image that their country projects onto the world stage through President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Menashri said "yes."

"People look at Iran in black and white. It's neither. They have young student movements, a cinema industry, newspapers, Internet. The youth of Iran don't necessarily agree with the government," he told The CJN. "But the problem is both they and [opposition] politicians don't have the power to dictate policy. This is in the hands of the conservative, extremist clerics."



Israeli professor David Menashri, an expert on Iran, speaks to an audience in Toronto last week.

He added that civil society in Iran is making progress, but not fast enough to effect a change in government policy to deter it from its nuclear ambitions and steer it toward more moderate rule.

He said the world needs to be "woken up" to Iran and begin "critical" diplomacy and talks with the state as a preliminary move to isolating it on the world stage, and to help its civil society discover a unified voice so that change can start from within.

"The youth in Iran should be asking themselves if what they see today reflects the goals of their parents during the [Iranian] revolution," Menashri said, adding that moderate-leaning Iranians have, over the past century, "fought to gain two major things... social welfare and freedom. They have not yet achieved either."

But what the West sees of Iran through the "apocalyptical" rantings of Ahmadinejad and the tacit support for the president by Supreme Leader Ali Hoseini-Khameini doesn't reflect the true nature of the country, he said.

"What we see in Iran today... is the bringing into power an extremist [body] that was on the fringes when Ayatollah Khomeini came to power 30 years ago," he said. "There are many political factions in Iran, [and] Iranian youth are well-educated, active and unhappy with this regime."

Despite this, there's little the forces of moderation can do inside Iran, because while many academics, intellectuals and students speak out routinely against the government, these same individuals often end up jailed because the military won't hesitate to crack down on dissenters, he said.

"There's a constant struggle between Iranian intellectuals and the regime," he said, but he lamented the lack of a unified opposition leadership to "confront" Ahmadinejad and the ruling clerics.

Continued on page 19

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Of rights and incongruities

From the editor's desk...

It is hard for many of us to reconcile the low station of the United Nations today with the very high and idealistic hopes that were the midwife of its birth.

In retrospect, it is clear that the birth of the organization and the broad multilateral agreement regarding its charter occurred in an anomalous moment of modern history – a window of time and hopeful purpose that was quickly tightly shuttered by the hands holding fast to ethnic hatreds, dogmatic ideologies and contentious superpowers.

The charter of the UN was signed on June 26, 1945. Article 1 sets out the four purposes of the organization:

"1. To maintain international peace and security…;

2. To develop friendly relations among nations… and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;

3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character…; and

4. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends."

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the General Assembly on Dec. 10, 1948. It was humanity's collective aspiration, if not its promise, too, that nations would never again tolerate the hideous barbarities and atrocities of World War II.

Even a small sampling of the sections in the preamble provide a sense of the loftiness of the declaration: "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world…

"Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom…"

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Seldom has a light been so quickly extinguished.

The important, life-affirming provisions of the charter and the declaration have been consistently trumped by the overarching imperatives of avarice, tribalism, intolerance, triumphalism, geopolitics, power politics and immovable ideologies.

In addition, and most determinant of all, we see clearly today, that the founding ethos of the UN is based on traditions and frameworks of values that spring primarily, though not exclusively, in the cumulative layerings through time of the universalist teachings of the West. These teachings do not generally reflect or mesh with the traditions or value systems from other cultures and societies on earth. In some cases, sadly, these teachings are mutually incongruous, even at odds with one another. For example, there is only minimal common ground, if even that, between theocratic Muslim society and liberal, secular, western society.

At the first session of the General Assembly in 1946, after the grotesque ruin of World War II, 51 member states participated. Six decades and three years later, some 192 states sit in the General Assembly, the majority from what we consider the developing or Third World. Twenty-two of the 192 states are Arab League members; 57 states belong to the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Thus, in the high-ceilinged, marble- and wood-finished, palatial chamber of the General Assembly, Israel does not stand a chance.

As has been well chronicled by scholars and experts, the UN is the chief fountain spewing hateful, anti-Israel rhetoric. It is not an accident of scheduling that the "Durban II" conference is meeting in Geneva during Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah – a further demonstration of unwithering contempt for Jews and the Jewish state. Durban II is the followup to the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism, which Arab countries and the Palestinians turned into a forum for an all-out assault on Israel.

Sometimes we dismiss the UN and its agencies as lacking any practical weight or significance. But this is a false notion. Throughout the many far-flung, impoverished, drought-stricken, starved, oppressed, medically underserved parts of the Third World, the imprimatur of the UN does carry weight even as its trucks bring food, medical supplies and humanitarian aid to the outstretched hands of weary needy populations.

Thus, rather than dismiss the UN, we must try to fight the corruption and the moral inversion as embodied in Durban II. And we must also remember that the fight is not that of Jews or Israel's alone. The government of Canada has proved that. So, too, has the American administration. Of late, the European Union has also inveighed against the transparent aims of the conference.

Last week, a day after Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann from Nicaragua, president of the General Assembly, criticized the United States on a trip to Iran where he met with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and other top Iranian leaders, the Obama administration rebuked him for his strident, partisan criticism of the United States and Israel.

Alejandro Wolff, the second-highest ranking U.S. diplomat at the UN, said Brockmann "has repeatedly abused his position to pursue his personal agenda, and in doing so he diminishes the office and harms the General Assembly."

Brockmann has accused Israel of "crucifying our Palestinian brothers and sisters" and has labelled Israel an "apartheid state." He has also called for a boycott of the Jewish state. Such is the rostrum of the UN. Any calumny can be spoken there.

But all of them must be answered.

– MBD

SeeJN

PRESIDENTIAL DUTIES INCLUDE BALLOONS: Israeli President Shimon Peres last week visited with young costumed skaters at the ice rink in the Canada Center in Metula. [Israel Sun photo]

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Recession fails to hinder young entrepreneurs

'We Give Back' campaign aids community

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The Canadian economy might be in a downward spiral, but two young Jewish businessmen are adamant about giving back to the community, and to do so, they're allocating a portion of their companies' profit to causes they hold dear.

Aaron Kaufman and Jared Golberg of 5th Element Events, a corporate event company, launched the "We Give Back" campaign last month to benefit Centre Camp, which operates out the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, and the Sunnybrook Foundation's Grant a Wish program for war veterans.

As of last month, the company has been putting aside two per cent of its profits from this year in a separate account. At the end of the year, Kaufman and Golberg will personally match the funds they raised and split the money between Centre Camp and the Sunnybrook Foundation.

Golberg, 5th Element's 30-year-old marketing manager, is a Centre Camp alumnus who spent 12 years building specialty programs for campers of all ages, and he said he doesn't want to stop now.

The camp, which provides specialty programs in dramatic arts and sports for more than 1,200 campers each year, has a scholarship fund to give less fortunate kids an opportunity to experience a summer at camp.

Aaron Kaufman

"When I was there, we created the scholarship fund to help children in need go to camp, so I wanted to give back to that scholarship fund," Golberg said.

Kaufman, 31, who owns 5th Element, chose to contribute to the Sunnybrook Foundation because he wanted to improve the quality of life of war veterans through the Grant a Wish program.

Jared Golberg

He also said he has a personal connection to the organization.

"Both of my wife's grandfathers are war veterans. One is still living. The Jewish chapel at Sunnybrook is called the Harvey Lister Chapel, and it was named in honour of my wife's grandfather," Kaufman said.

"This is the kind of place where people and veterans deserve to be given something back. People fought for a good portion of their lives for us."

Golberg added that both he and Kaufman wanted to make a point of giving back in spite of the economic situation.

"We thought of something we wanted to do in 2009 that focused on the community, and as most people can see with what's going on in the news, what's going on financially across the globe, we wanted to show that we're a company that gives back, even in a time of uncertainty."

Under the umbrella of the 5th Element Group, Kaufman launched another company called Vintage Entertainment, which provides entertainment for functions such as bar and bat mitzvahs and weddings.

"With Vintage, we will also be giving back by planting a tree in Israel for every family who books our service. We want to stay connected to Israel and its rich heritage by giving back as a company and in the name of our clients," he said.

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Remembering the Past, Shaping the Future

Sanctions urged against anti-Israel group at York

University president chatted with suspended group, students say

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Jewish groups at York University are urging the administration to enforce its own sanctions against an anti-Israel student group after York president Mamdouh Shoukri was spotted chatting with its members at a table it set up despite being suspended from campus.

According to a joint statement released last week by Hillel at York, Hasbara at York and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Students Against Israel Apartheid (SAIA) continues to operate openly on campus, despite a 30-day suspension it received earlier this month in connection with a Feb. 12 anti-Israel rally in the Vari Hall rotunda that disturbed classes.

Hillel and Hasbara were fined for taking part in a counter-rally the same day, and Hasbara was also given a 30-day suspension.

Kaley Ames, a York student and a pro-Israel activist on campus, said she saw York President Mamdouh Shoukri speaking with members of SAIA who had set up an information table and a mock "apartheid wall" on March 11.

Ames reported the incident to UJA Federation and signed an affidavit saying she witnessed Shoukri at the SAIA table.

"Shoukri is well aware that SAIA is tabling and they are violating their terms of suspension… [and he] didn't do anything about it," Ames told The CJN.

Ames said SAIA was tabling in a hallway linking Vari Hall with York's student centre.

She said that while she was campaigning for candidates in the upcoming York Federation of Students' election, she saw Shoukri speaking to YFS' current vice-president of equity, Krisna Saravanamuttu.

"I watched in horror as the president walked from Krisna to the SAIA table, engaging Hammam Farah, the person who was manning the SAIA table," Ames said.

"I could have gone up to the president and started questioning him, but I wanted to see what his motives were, why he was going up to the table… It was clear that he didn't go up to tell them 'I've put you on suspension.' He was smiling, he was nodding his head."

Ames said she couldn't say for sure what Shoukri was saying, but she was upset that the president didn't do anything about a group that was operating on campus despite having been suspended.

"Time and time again, York University administration issues press releases and statements and suspensions, and they fall back on their word," she said.

Hillel at York president Daniel Ferman said it's "outrageous for York University to issue a news release announcing disciplinary actions while refusing to take action itself against a suspended group operating contrary to the sanctions against it."

Hasbara at York president Aaron Rosenberg added that the incident with Shoukri and SAIA is just another example of the "smoke and mirrors tactics" the York administration uses to portray that "everything is under control when rules are arbitrarily, selectively and unfairly enforced."

In a statement to The CJN, Rob Tiffin, York's vice-president of students, said that "there are still students and an alumnus setting up a table in Vari Hall where they are promoting the views held by SAIA."

He added: "Members of SAIA are not permitted to book space on campus, with the exception of the separately incorporated and owned Student Centre. No space reservations have been approved for SAIA since the imposition of sanctions. Members of SAIA have not been present at the table in Vari Hall."

Tiffin said that Shoukri "frequently passes through Vari Hall and takes note of all activity as it is a major crossroads for the university. I also know that he is engaged frequently by students and others."

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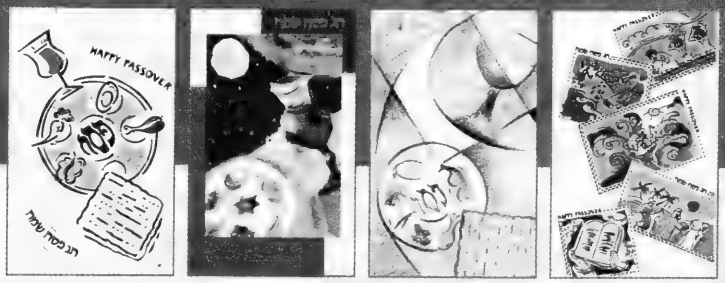

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The silent conscience of the anti-Israel activist

Earlier this month the International Criminal Court in The Hague issued a warrant for the arrest of President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan. He was indicted for crimes that the court says he committed against the people of Darfur, for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The press release issued by the court was quite to-the-point in explaining the reason for the indictment: "He [al-Bashir] is suspected of being criminally responsible, as an indirect (co-)perpetrator, for intentionally directing attacks against an important part of the civilian population of Darfur, Sudan, murdering, exterminating, raping, torturing and forcibly transferring large numbers of civilians, and pillaging their property."

It was the first warrant of arrest ever issued for a sitting head of state by the court. In response to the indictment, al-Bashir defiantly and disparagingly expelled 13 humanitarian aid organizations from Darfur.

As has been well documented by the United Nations itself, more than 300,000 people have been killed in the past five years in Darfur; uncounted thousands have been harmed and abused through every vile form of atrocity, and an estimated 2.5 million people have been forced from their homes.

Many observers doubt al-Bashir will ever be brought to justice. But they contend that the indictment is at least an unambiguous moral clarion has been sounded that the world is outraged by and abhors what has been done to the victims of Darfur. Moreover and especially, they add, the world abhors that what was done in Darfur was done deliberately, with prior planning and evil intention; hence, the indictment.

But wait. Not everyone has been outraged by "the murdering, exterminating, raping, torturing, forcibly transferring large numbers of civilians and pillaging."

The Arab League has never once condemned or expressed disapproval of the actions of the al-Bashir government.

Last week, in an act of inter-terrorist solidarity, Iran, Hamas and Syria sent top officials to Khartoum to denounce the warrant for Bashir's arrest. Iran's parliamentary speaker, Ali Larijani; Hamas' second-in-command in its Damascus political office, Moussa Abu Marzouk; Syria's parliamentary speaker, Mahmoud al-Abrash and various representatives of other Palestinian militant factions joined Sudanese dignitaries after prayers on Friday to shout their opprobrium at the West for deigning to consider "murdering, exterminating, raping, torturing," etcetera, worthy of indictment.

The irony is too painful, and the hypocrisy is too blatant to ignore: Israel defends itself against unceasing terrorism from the Iranian- and Syrian-backed regime of Hamas. Western activists pillory Israel for doing so. Yet these same activists cannot find the conscience, let alone the words, to rebuke, reprove or reprimand Iran, Syria or Hamas for standing alongside the criminally indicted tyrant in Sudan.

25 years ago in The CJN

Secularist MK Shulamit Aloni slammed legislation proposed by Israel's religious affairs ministry that would settle the "Who is a Jew" question according to Orthodox rules. She claimed it would deepen tensions between religious and secular Israelis. The proposed law dealt with litigation about marriage, divorce, alimony, child custody and property rights.

Editorials & Letters

Dry Bones
TWO HOLIDAYS, TWO MIRACLES.
THE PURIM MIRACLE WAS SO NATURAL THAT MANY JEWS DID NOT SEE IT AS A MIRACLE.
YUP!
THE PASSOVER MIRACLES WERE SO SUPERNATURAL THAT MANY JEWS DID NOT BELIEVE WHAT THEY SAW.
TRUE!
WHO KNOWS WHICH KIND OF MIRACLE IT WILL TAKE TO RESCUE MODERN ISRAEL?
WHO KNOWS?
BUT WHEN IT HAPPENS WE WON'T BELIEVE IT!
NOPE!
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York can learn a lesson from Concordia

Amid all the concern over the situation at York University, it's useful to consider an example of a university that did it right. It was September 2002 at Concordia University, and anti-Israel activists were preparing to prevent then-Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu from speaking.

Anti-Israel protesters were successful in silencing Netanyahu by smashing furniture, breaking windows, allegedly assaulting pro-Israel students and clashing with police. Realizing that they were unable to secure the lecture hall, police cancelled the event. In a report released months after the incident, Concordia admitted that it was "not adequately prepared for the events of that day."

Concordia strengthened and enforced its code of conduct. Several individuals were subject to disciplinary hearings, and some were suspended or expelled. Recognizing that most students just want to go to class without being accosted by ideologues, the administration sought to "take back" its space by centralizing space bookings and by upholding the space-booking rules. Concordia's principled stance has gone a long way toward calming tensions and encouraging respectful dialogue. Concordia learned a lesson that York administrators should examine today.

York's situation is considerably more challenging than the one at Concordia, as Jewish students are afraid to be Jewish on campus ("Students under 'siege' at York U," CJN, Feb. 19). But unlike Concordia, instead of strengthening its space-booking policies, York has consistently relaxed them. Instead of consistently prosecuting code of conduct violators, York has chosen to turn a blind eye to the problem until recently, when it imposed inequitable sanctions against Jewish groups for joining a counter-rally. Instead of empowering its security officers, York has chosen to limit their authority, making them incapable of enforcing whatever limited rules exist.

Michael Diamond
Toronto

* * *

Community-at-large's somnolence

As the costs of Jewish education have been skyrocketing beyond the rate of inflation for years, imposing significant financial strain upon the non-wealthy segments of the community and creating numerous "economic refugees" from the Jewish day school system, the community-at-large stands by and watches. When a serious proposal to redress the long-standing inequities in educational funding was brought forth by a political party during the last election, and the government of the day waged war tooth and nail against the concept of faith-based education, the response of the Ontario Jewish community was tepid at best. Recently, we have read that the centralized governing body of Jewish education in Toronto has engaged in a major downsizing exercise ("Federation downsizes Mercaz, cuts 10 jobs," CJN, March 12), while several schools are having trouble meeting their rental obligations. There is no surer guarantee of the Jewish future than a Jewishly well-educated younger generation. Perhaps now, the community-at-large will arise from its somnolence.

Jerrold Landau
Toronto

* * *

Hamilton's Jewish Arab Muslim Dialogue

I must add my perspective to Lawrence Hart's view that the Hamilton Jewish Arab Muslim Dialogue "turned out to be no more than a cynical public relations exercise that has fomented distrust, divided our community and made a mockery of civil discourse" ("Hamilton dialogue collapses," CJN, March 5).

As a former Hamilton broadcaster, I frequently invited dialogue members to participate in my issues-oriented news talk program, and at the most sensitive of times. I certainly witnessed differences of opinion and philosophy, yet dialogue members invariably, openly and with care addressed the most challenging of Jewish, Muslim, Arab and greater Canadian community issues. My experience with the committee during the years it participated in my broadcasts was invariably positive.

The committee's outreach to the greater Hamilton community was not insignificant. A case in point: in 2006, it sponsored a successful public presentation of interfaith dialogue with UCLA professor Judea Pearl, father of slain journalist Daniel Pearl, and Akbar Ahmed, who teaches Islamic studies at American University.

Roy Green
Montreal

* * *

Offended by term 'Shabbat Itanu'

As a parent of a child with challenges, I am truly offended by the term Shabbat Itanu in "Jewish Toronto gears up for Inclusive Action Week" and the accompanying advertisement (Jewish Toronto, by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, CJN, Feb. 5). By definition, *itanu* translates as "with us" and implies a division between us – the mainstream of the Jewish community – and them, people with special needs. This is exactly the attitude we, as parents, wish to change.

Susie Sokol
Thornhill

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Perspectives

Truth and hope

By ARI SHAVIT
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In all his election campaigns, Benjamin Netanyahu has told the truth. He was right three years after the 1993 Oslo accords when he argued that the accords had failed, and he was right in 1999 when he claimed Ehud Barak would divide Jerusalem.

Netanyahu was right in 2006 when he warned that the previous year's disengagement from Gaza would bring Katyusha rockets to Ashkelon, and he was right in 2009 when he claimed that both Israel's security and its economy were under threat. But two things were missing from all of Netanyahu's election campaigns: organization and vision.

Netanyahu always told his voters the truth, but never offered them hope and leadership. Morose pessimism and negligent conduct clouded his command.

This was also the case when Netanyahu was prime minister from June 1996 to July 1999. Contrary to popular belief, he scored quite a few successes during his three years in power. He repaired the economy, quashed inflation and advanced economic liberalism. He reduced terror, conducted negotiations with Syria and signed the Wye River accord that dealt with territorial concessions in the West Bank. During his tenure, war did not break out and fewer Palestinians were killed than during the terms of Ariel Sharon, Barak or Ehud Olmert.

But although Netanyahu acted responsibly and judiciously, he failed to provide the people with a clear vision and a worthy administration. Blundering conduct and a constant confrontational attitude marred his term as prime minister.

Leaders of stature know the nature of their world. Franklin Delano Roosevelt knew that the relevant world in his time was the Great Depression. Harry S. Truman knew that for him, it was the Cold War. Bill Clinton knew his relevant world was the economy, as does Barack Obama. In this sense, Netanyahu is the most promising of Israel's leaders. His macro perception is superb and he thoroughly understands political and economic processes.

Unlike his rivals, Netanyahu knows that the relevant world of today is one of radical Islam and economic crisis. Being both statesman and economist, Netanyahu has the qualifications needed to deal with this challenging world. But inferior micromanagement and the inability to give hope could thwart his efforts again and again if he becomes prime minister. Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint, and without quality management, any government would be lost.

Benjamin Netanyahu campaigned as being "strong on security and strong on the economy."
[Israel Sun photo]

Netanyahu's starting point is difficult. The dependence on Yisrael Beiteinu, Shas and the National Union does not leave him much room to manoeuvre. And yet, even in the pressure cooker in which he must operate, Netanyahu could have done much more than he did. He should not have placed the rule of law in the hands of Yisrael Beiteinu leader Avigdor Lieberman and Minister of Justice Daniel Friedmann. He should not have abandoned Likud moderates Silvan Shalom and Dan Meridor. He should not have created a feeling that there is insufficient excellence at the top, and he should not have formed a right-wing government whose fate has already been set and which offers no new ideas.

It's not too late. Netanyahu can still demand of his partners to prove that their patriotism is expressed in deeds as well as in words. Even if a broad government cannot be formed, Netanyahu and Lieberman have the ability to put together a fine cabinet. For example: Uriel Reichman as education minister instead of Friedmann as justice minister; a finance minister from outside politics, chosen for his or her professional abilities. He could appoint national councils for economic, foreign and education affairs – and a government of brilliant, talented people rather than small-minded extremists.

Netanyahu was raised and educated in the United States. No American president would dare enter the Oval Office with the people surrounding Netanyahu. No American president would attempt to govern without a great concept, without the ability to manage and without a top-rate team.

Israel is not America, but Israel is no shtetl, either. Israel has a great deal of talent. Israel's human capital is its greatest hope. If Netanyahu wants to succeed, he must enlist this capital and harness it to true vision.

Only with governmental excellence and a clear vision does Netanyahu have a chance of realizing his leadership potential. If he cannot deal with his weaknesses, Netanyahu will not be up to the tremendous task facing him.

Israel must address flawed electoral system

By IZAK PARVIZ NAZARIAN
JTA

The predicament created by Israel's recent Knesset elections does not reveal any new problems in the country's electoral system; it simply underscores the problems everyone already knows are there.

The problems have created a dire situation. Clearly, the Israeli electoral system has failed again, and the underlying problems of why it happened need to be addressed immediately.

The new political map shows the immense difficulty of establishing a coalition government, especially one that will be able to lead the country through these challenging times. Even worse, the Knesset represents so many fragmented groups that it is extremely difficult to legislate effectively.

Politicians on the campaign trail often promise electoral reform, but those promises have gone unfulfilled.

If the current Knesset does not make government and electoral reform a top national priority, a shaky coalition will push Israelis into yet another election in less than two or three years, and again it will be impossible to establish a stable government.

Various solutions to Israel's problems of government instability have already been proposed.

In 2005, then-president Moshe Katsav's Commission for the Examination of the Structure of Governance in Israel was created to propose recommendations to remedy the problem. The commission, headed by Prof. Menachem Magidor of the Hebrew University, spent 15 months researching alternatives to Israel's current system.

In its final report, the commission recommended that regional elections be held to elect half of the Knesset's members. The idea is that if 50 per cent of Knesset members are elected in regional elections, there will be a stronger tie between representatives and voters, and the Knesset members will be directly accountable to their constituents.

Some Israeli officials have proposed transitioning to a presidential system. Politicians and scholars, however, are deterred by the risk of concentrating too much power in the hands of a single person.

Increasing the threshold necessary for Knesset representation to five per cent of the popular vote is a middle-of-the-road reform that would reduce the number of smaller parties in the Knesset and thus promote and strengthen bigger parties. Another worthwhile reform would be to create a perennial budget to eliminate the "circus of extortion" that plagues Israeli coalition negotiations.

During a meeting with the members of the Economic Forum for Government Stability of the Citizens' Empowerment Center in Israel, Kadima chair Tzipi Livni said she does not reject the transition to a presidential system. However, she cautioned that Israel would need to make sure the appropriate checks and balances were in place and that there would be the possibility of forcing the president to step down, in extreme situations, before the conclusion of his or her four-year term.

Whatever solutions are implemented, Israel needs to reform the electoral system and stabilize the government as soon as possible. The only way to do this is for the larger parties to agree to work together in creating new legislation to secure government stability.

Izak Parviz Nazarian is the founder of The Citizens' Empowerment Center in Israel.

Shul business isn't for rabbis

When liberal rabbis in Germany were expected to obtain a general education in addition to their Jewish studies, some Orthodox opponents would say that when rabbis became doctors, Judaism became sick. They feared that secular education would take precious time away from Torah study.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

They may have been quite unrealistic, but perhaps not entirely wrong. Nowadays, when rabbis (other than haredi ones) have a secular education, they're expected to spend a lot of time away from their Jewish studies. Thus, for example, if you call a rabbi only to be told that she or he can't come to the phone because she or he is engaged in the study of a particularly difficult Talmud passage, you're likely to be incensed at the lack of pastoral care. But if you're told that she or he is in a committee meeting, you'll feel reassured that the person is doing good work.

That's behind my reservations about a program in management education for rabbis and synagogue administrators that I recently read about in this paper. The purpose, as I understand it, is to better equip "clergy" to manage shul business.

Priests in their clergy roles are often expected to be responsible for the general management of their churches. Rabbis, on the other hand, are teachers. After mastering the Torah of balance sheets and fundraising techniques, will they still have the time and the inclination to study and teach Torah?

Of course, rabbis shouldn't be kept out of synagogue management. Yet I'm worried about the kind of Judaism that may emerge as a result of the ever-growing emphasis on the business aspect. I firmly believe that a rabbi's greatest contribution to Jewish life is to study and articulate Judaism, not dabble in management.

The pressure to learn about administration reflects the current trend to turn teachers into fundraisers. Every head of a university department will tell you about it. As things are now, many synagogues of all stripes – especially in the United States, but by no means only there – judge their spiritual leaders by their worldly achievements. Jews rarely brag about the erudition of their rabbis. They're more likely to tell you about how much money they've raised for the new building.

Major contributors usually expect special concessions. Will the management courses also teach how to minister to the rich? And what will this do to the other congregants?

In the current financial meltdown, synagogues, like other institutions, are in such dire straits that cutting corners to obtain funds is understandable, and at times perhaps even justified. Nevertheless, there's a lingering suspicion that when rabbis become fundraisers, Judaism goes bankrupt.

A poor display on Canadian campuses

Universities across Canada have never been particularly hospitable toward Israel, but they take it a step further with Israeli Apartheid Week, which took place earlier this month. The annual event has proven to be a frightful time for Jewish students, who find themselves faced with anti-Semitism on their campuses.

Justin Dahan in Ottawa

Although this week is widely known as being anti-Israel, it's hardly the only time that anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist ideas have been evident on campus. Perhaps one of the most prominent examples occurred on Feb. 11 at York University when pro-Palestinian protesters gathered in front of the York Hillel offices to voice their opinions against Israel (under the guise of protesting efforts to impeach the student council).

It got to a point where those inside were blocked from exiting the Hillel office, and the entire atrium was crowded with people chanting anti-Israel and anti-Jewish slogans, going so far as to call Israel a "Nazi state." Police were called to the scene, but no arrests were made. Fortunately, nobody was hurt, but Jewish students' security and safety on campus was certainly diminished.

Sadly, this is an obstacle that many Jewish students must face, and it leaves many of them frightened. Considering that Toronto has a large Jewish population, both living in the city and attending school from out of town, this means that a large percentage of students are uncomfortable on campus.

Campuses have gone from being relatively one-dimensional academic fora to being the backdrop of many political protests – a trend that dates back to at least the 1960s, to the widely publicized anti-war protests during the U.S. war in Vietnam. The danger with these latest protests is in how they affect Jewish students, and even deter them, by intimidation, from their studies, which, of course, is what universities are meant for.

At my school, the University of Ottawa, flyers depicting an Israeli helicopter gunship shooting at a Palestinian child labelled "Gaza" were displayed on campus to raise awareness for Israeli Apartheid Week. The school ultimately banned the poster from appearing on campus, but it could be found elsewhere nearby, and the damage had already been done by the time the posters were taken down. If this poster had been displayed off campus, such as at a place of employment, workers would be allowed to file a complaint that it was offensive and creates a poisoned work environment, and everyone is entitled to a safe working environment and place of study.

Freedom of speech is important and a part of every Canadian citizen's rights, but in the past, courts have set clear precedents in creating safe environments for work and study for everyone. Having this shamefully misleading poster appear at and around the University of Ottawa places the school under a dark cloud, overshadowing its many positive attributes and accentuating the negative ones.

Amidst the anti-Israel sentiment that echoed throughout Ottawa and Canada during Israeli Apartheid Week, there were a few glimmering lights of hope. Jewish groups on Ottawa campuses did their best to provide a safe haven for Jewish students and an alternative to constant Israel-bashing.

Chabad, in particular, has stepped up and provided a great environment for Jewish students. Rabbi Chaim Boyarsky, along with a plethora of youthful helpers, including Chabad student president Adam Berktin, have helped provide a place for Jewish students from out of town to gather on Shabbat for traditional prayers and food. Rabbi Boyarsky, and his wife, Yocheved, have also provided students with chances to gather and discuss theology, as well as life, in an open environment.

How did they react to the Israeli Apartheid Week protests on a campus that they're so familiar with? They just kept on spreading Jewish cheer by setting up a booth in the midst of the hostility to assist students with putting on tfillin and preparing for Purim festivities. They sent a strong message that we stand together as Jews and will not be intimidated.

What we can learn from the Israeli tennis team

The Israel-Sweden Davis Cup tennis match that took place March 8 was probably not the most watched of all time. The most anticipated match of the tournament was probably the one in which world No. 1 Rafael Nadal faced world No. 3 Novak Djokovic.

Joseph Juda in Toronto

The Israel-Sweden match didn't have the best players. In fact, its highest-ranked player was Dudi Sela, the world No. 63, who has yet to win an ATP title. And yet, despite this, Israel's victory was one of the greatest triumphs of the tournament and could teach all Jewish students a lesson.

Within the past few weeks, both Shahar Pe'er, the top-ranked Israeli woman, and the Israeli Davis Cup team have been singled out because they're from Israel. Peer wasn't allowed to play in a tournament in Dubai after the United Arab Emirates would not grant her a visa due to "safety concerns." A week later, the UAE only begrudgingly granted Israeli Andy Ram a visa to play after the ATP threatened to punish the tournament for Pe'er not having been granted a visa to enter the country.

Pe'er could only watch from Israel as her peers played in the lucrative Dubai tournament. Yet despite this, she maintained her dignity and only expressed her regret that the UAE mixed sports and politics and could not put differences aside for the sake of the sport.

Shortly thereafter, the Swedish city of Malmo announced that because of fears for the Israeli team's safety, fans would not be allowed to watch the Israel-Sweden Davis Cup match. Due to the heavy Muslim population in Malmo, the city council feared that there would be riots. On March 8, the Israeli team faced the Swedish team without any fans in the arena, while violent demonstrations took place outside.

Few people believe that Sweden could not actually guarantee the safety of the Israeli tennis players. The arena that the matches were played in, Baltic Hall, only holds 4,077 people, which is hardly a large audience for a major tennis event. Even if this ludicrous claim was true, the event could have been moved to a different area in Sweden with a smaller Muslim population. Instead, it's more likely that whoever was in charge of this event wanted Israel to look bad, with the streets full of demonstrators and an embarrassed Israeli team forced to play in an empty arena.

No doubt the Israeli team felt unwanted. It can't be comfortable to play in such an environment. And yet, in a thrilling five-set match, Harel Levy prevailed over Andreas Vinciguerra shortly after Dudi Sela beat Thomas Johansson, the former Australian Open champion.

The Israelis beat Sweden 3-2 and showed the world that they would not be scared by a violent crowd and allow themselves to be defeated, even if they were unwanted. What was meant to make the Israeli team look bad ended up being to Sweden's disadvantage, as they had no fans to cheer them on in the final few sets.

The Israeli team didn't allow the intimidation to make them feel uncomfortable. They were proud of their country and chose not to walk away.

March 1 to 8 was Israeli Apartheid Week on many university campuses. Jewish students everywhere undoubtedly felt uncomfortable. Many times they were intimidated for no other reason than the fact that they were Jewish. At York University a few weeks ago, students were forced to lock themselves in the Hillel offices as a crowd surrounded them and made them feel threatened and unwanted.

We should learn a lesson from Israel's tennis team. Keep your dignity and play the game, even if others want you to fail. In the end, the better group will prevail.

Joseph Juda is co-president of the Jewish Law Students' Association at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto.

The Kirshner File

Iraq remains a work in progress

Shortly after American forces entered Baghdad in April 2003, following the U.S. invasion of Iraq on March 20, looters ransacked the National Museum, a repository of Iraqi archeological treasures, stealing many of its priceless antiquities. The pillaging of the National Museum was symbolic of the disorder and chaos that descended on Iraq in the wake of the attack, dubbed Operation Iraqi Freedom, the most important armed U.S. intervention in the Arab world since Lebanon in 1982.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Astonishingly, the then U.S. secretary of defence, Donald Rumsfeld, laughed off the thefts as a minor event. "Stuff happens," he said in a flippant comment that appeared to underscore his insensitivity.

The wholesale ransacking of the National Museum was a troubling sign that the United States had not properly prepared itself for post-war realities in Iraq, as well as a harbinger of further trouble.

In the ensuing months, U.S. casualties rose by leaps and bounds as a nationwide insurgency – supported and staffed by disaffected Baathists, Islamic fundamentalists and a sprinkling of common criminals – took hold. The uprising was at odds with a boastful claim, delivered by the then president of the United States, George W. Bush, in May of that fateful year, that major combat operations had ended.

As the rebellion evolved, deflating U.S. domestic backing for the increasingly costly conflict, Iraq was convulsed by an unstoppable wave of suicide and roadside bombings, assassinations and sectarian fighting, which pitted minority Sunnis against majority Shiites and brought Iraq ever closer to a full-blown civil war.

Iraq seemed like a hopeless basket case, prompting some Iraqis to pine for its deposed dictator, Saddam Hussein.

But last month's partial reopening of the National Museum, with its exquisite collection of ancient cuneiform tablets, stone reliefs, pottery and sculptures, was generally viewed as an indicator of tangibly better times in Iraq.

Six years to the week after the United States and its allies stormed into Iraq and made short work of Saddam's ruthless, totalitarian government, the resurrection of the National Museum was a small but telling example that Iraq's return to normalcy has begun in earnest. But just as countless looted pieces in the National Museum are still missing, so the process of stabilization and reconstruction still has a long way to go.

By general consent, the situation began to improve markedly after the Bush administration, the architect of the invasion, acknowledged that more troops were needed to provide security in Baghdad, the capital, and in Anbar province, the heartland of the insurgency. On Jan. 10, 2007, Bush announced the "surge," the deployment of more than 20,000 additional soldiers to Iraq, bringing the total to about 140,000.

Before ordering more troops to Iraq, Bush had been under the illusion that Iraq could be controlled and pacified by a far smaller force. Call it wishful thinking, if you will. This illusion was fostered by Rumsfeld, who wilfully ignored advice to the contrary by some of his generals.

Thinly stretched U.S. forces, augmented by troops from a coalition of countries, including Britain, Poland, Japan and South Korea, could not possibly deal with the mushrooming violence and sectarian killings.

Admitting failure, Bush adopted the surge, devised by the commanding general in Iraq, David Petraeus (who has since taken over the U.S. Central Command, which covers the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, the Horn of Africa and parts of Central Asia). Under the surge, U.S. and Iraqi troops have secured violent-prone neighbourhoods in Baghdad and dealt the insurgency in Anbar province a devastating blow.

The surge was opposed by some American politicians, who argued that the war was unwinnable and feared that it would divert resources from the war in Afghanistan and the war on terror.

Two years on, however, the surge seems to have worked, with the average number of attacks in Baghdad and Anbar province having fallen by a remarkable degree. Considering the fact that one-quarter of the American death toll in Iraq once occurred in Anbar province, this is a pivotal achievement.

Yet the new dynamic is attributable not only to an infusion of fresh U.S. troops. In Anbar province, where U.S. troops fought bitter and prolonged battles with rebels in Falluja and Ramadi, flattening neighbourhoods to forge hard-won victories, the back of the insurgency was also broken by the formation of armed groups known as Sunni Awakening Councils. Financed and trained by the Americans, the councils have since spread to other Sunni-populated areas of Iraq.

Incredibly enough, most of its 100,000 strong membership is made up of former insurgents. Along with local tribal chiefs, they switched sides to show their disgust with the Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia movement, which alienated locals by sowing sectarian differences and trying to impose a radical brand of Islam on the people. Commanded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi until his death in 2006, Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia is still a force to be reckoned with, but according to Petraeus, it has been significantly degraded in counter-insurgency operations.

Alongside the surge, the United States has gradually ceded operational control of the war to Iraqi forces in 11 out of Iraq's 18 provinces, a development that is in line with Washington's desire to withdraw the bulk of its army from Iraq. The Americans have also brought a measure of democracy to Iraq through the medium of a constitution and local, provincial and national elections. No one, least of all Petraeus and his successor, Gen. Raymond Odierno, believes that the gains of the surge are guaranteed to endure. Prior to stepping down, Petraeus warned that the gains ratcheted up so far are "tenuous" and "reversible," and that "serious challenges" loom ahead.

U.S. President Barack Obama *[Carrie Devorah photo]*

The first challenge, as outlined by U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates, is daunting: "How do we preserve the gains that have already been achieved, and expand upon them, even as the number of U.S. forces are shrinking?"

Barack Obama, the new American president who promised to end the war, announced recently that U.S. combat troops will be pulled out by August 2010, leaving a residual force of 35,000 to 50,000 to hunt down insurgents, train Iraqi soldiers and guard U.S. institutions.

Obama's timetable is in sync with a U.S.-Iraqi security agreement, signed last November, that requires American combat forces to withdraw from Iraqi cities by June 30, 2009 and from the country by the close of 2011, unless the United States and Iraq negotiate a separate pact to extend the U.S. presence. (Foreign troops have more or less left, leaving Britain with the largest non-American contingent).

Apart from the burning issue of troop levels, the primary challenges confronting the United States and its main Iraqi partner, Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, run the gamut from security to economics.

The insurgency continues to rage in two provinces, Nineveh and Diyala, though the rest of Iraq is fairly calm. The anti-American Shiite cleric, Moktada al-Sadr, remains popular and influential. Basic services, from electricity to running water, have yet to be restored to pre-2003 levels. Falling oil prices are postponing urgent reconstruction projects and exacerbating an unemployment problem.

Four million Iraqis are still displaced from their homes, and tensions are brewing between the Kurdish autonomous government and the central government. Iran may yet reap immense benefits from Saddam's overthrow. And if Iraq cosies up to Iran, this would hardly be to Israel's strategic advantage.

Clearly, Iraq is a work in progress, its future far from settled. But the United States has no intention of making a precipitous and irresponsible withdrawal from Iraq, realizing that Iraqi forces are not yet capable of securing the nation from its enemies.

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Court dismisses war crimes case appeal

David Matas

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

The case to strip suspected war criminal Wasyl Odynsky of his Canadian citizenship and facilitate his deportation continued this past Monday after a court rejected his efforts to stop Jewish groups from continuing proceedings against him.

Odynsky is suspected of war crimes while serving Nazi Germany as a Ukrainian guard stationed at the Trawniki and Poniatowa labour camps. The former was a training centre for Ukrainian guards who were enlisted as auxiliaries to SS killing units, according to the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center.

The case to strip him of his Canadian citizenship was pursued in appellate court by B'nai Brith Canada last April after it was initially dropped by the Canadian government in 2007 due to a lack of evidence.

Last Thursday, the Federal Court of Appeal dismissed Odynsky's argument to halt the challenges by Jewish human rights groups to his effort to remain in Canada. The court determined he lied about his past upon entering the country in 1949.

The ruling allowed David Matas, B'nai Brith's senior counsel, to "argue the merits of this case" in Toronto this past Monday, Matas said in a B'nai Brith statement last week.

"The government has demonstrated a clear inconsistency in its application of the law with regards to Nazi-era cases," Matas said. "In the case of Wasyl Odynsky, court rulings have clearly demonstrated that he lied upon his wartime past when entering the country."

In earlier testimony, Odynsky denied all allegations of war crimes against him. He stated he was forcibly posted to the labour camps under duress and was merely a perimeter guard at the camps, never having direct contact with any prisoners.

"We are pleased to have the opportunity... to argue the merits of this case before a Federal Court in the hope that the path will be cleared for revocation of [Odynsky's] citizenship and his subsequent and immediate deportation from Canada," Matas said.

Though it hasn't participated in the case to this point, Canadian Jewish Congress is "looking into" engaging in it as it goes forward, Congress CEO Bernie Farber told The CJN last Friday.

"We're certainly gratified that this case has not come to an end," Farber said.

"Our position has always been that anyone who was involved as a Nazi enabler, and Mr. Odynsky, in our view fits that description... every effort should be made to deport him from Canada."

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Congress backs renewal of anti-terrorism provisions

Compiled by CJN Staff

Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) has commended Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Justice Minister Rob Nicholson for introducing Bill C-19, legislation that restores two elements of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) that lapsed two years ago, and for retaining safeguards to protect against the potential adverse impact of these measures.

The first, recognizance with conditions, would renew preventive police powers, under certain conditions, to arrest a suspect when a terrorist act is perceived to be imminent. The second, investigative hearings, would compel someone believed to have knowledge of terrorist activities to testify at closed-door judicial hearings.

Police would have to show a judge that every other option available had been used first, and witnesses compelled to testify can hire a lawyer.

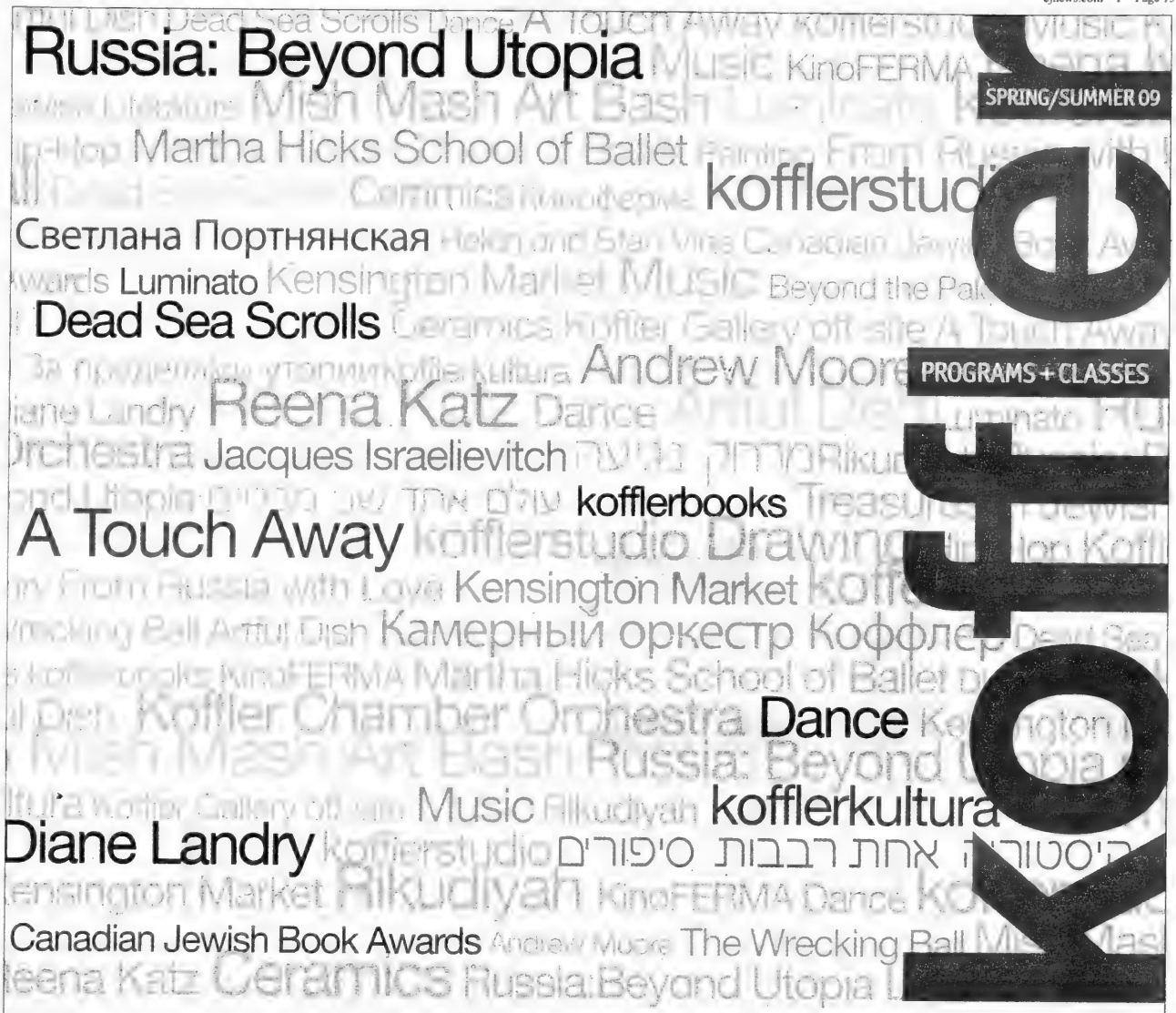
"As a community that is particularly sensitive to the threat of terrorism, we support the approach of the Anti-Terrorism Act because it set its primary sights on prevention of terrorist acts," CJC co-president Sylvain Abitbol said. "A look around the world clearly tells us that terrorist acts remain a clear and present danger. Our security and police personnel must have sufficient authority to take preventive action to interdict possible attacks before they occur. Our anti-terrorism régime is stronger with the re-introduction of these two elements plus the additional safeguards."

Rabbi Reuven Bulka

CJC co-president Rabbi Reuven Bulka added, "These measures provide a stern test to a democratic society, which must tread the delicate path of providing for the safety of its citizens while minimally curtailing their liberties. Governments such as ours must thwart the efforts of those who would use our open society against us and then shut it down, but such actions themselves must always be rooted in, and comport with, the rule of law.

"Properly framed and implemented counter-terrorism legislation enhances civil liberties and core Charter of Rights values and protects our way of life from the threat of terrorism."

These two measures were not used after their initial passage, and Congress CEO Bernie Farber said that this "suggests that the dire predictions of mass human rights abuses flowing from such extraordinary authority were overstated, not that these powers are unnecessary in the fight against terrorism."



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UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO

Canadian Society for Yad Vashem gets new chair

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Fran Sonshine, newly elected national chair of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, says this position is a natural for her.

As she and her husband, Ed, are both children of Holocaust survivors,"the story has always been in our homes. It permeates the way we look at life," she said.

The organization was founded 20 years ago, in order to implement the vision of Yad Vashem, the Holocaust remembrance and education centre in Jerusalem, through events, programs and fundraising activities across Canada.

Succeeding founding chair Hank Rosenbaum, Sonshine said her mission is to strengthen the profile of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, and widen its outreach.

Among her other community activities, Sonshine, a former elementary school teacher, was the 2009 annual campaign co-chair of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto with Henry Wolfond, and is the immediate past chair of the board of Baycrest.

She has been also been involved with other organizations, including State of Israel Bonds and Aish Hatorah; and as well as being a past chair of the Toronto Hadassah-WIZO bazaar, she has led missions to Israel and travelled across Canada as a leadership trainer for that organization.

She and her husband established one of the first legacy funds for the Toronto Jewish Foundation, and were honoured by the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem in 2003. They have also been recipients of the International spirit of Jerusalem Award given by State of Israel Bonds, Jewish National Fund Negev Dinner honorees, and last year, were one of five couples honoured by Baycrest at its Tribute Gala.

Fran Sonshine

Sonshine, mother of three and grandmother of six, said she is grateful for the opportunity to "[take] my connection with Yad Vashem to a new level. Last year, I had the privilege [of visiting] Yad Vashem in Jerusalem to experience first-hand various events and programs on the dynamic campus. I look forward to working with Canadians across the country to further Holocaust remembrance and education."

Especially now, she said, "we have a big job to do. There is still a lot of Holocaust denial, and it's becoming more acceptable. It's infuriating, and it's more important than ever before to work with people and remind them that it sure can happen again. We have to stand up and talk."

Among her plans, she said, is to bring to Canada Echoes and Reflections, a multimedia curriculum on the Holocaust developed by Yad Vashem, the Anti-Defamation League and the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education.

"It has been a success in the United States, and I would like to roll it out here. There are schools here that teach the Holocaust, but this is an actual lesson plan."

She would also like to develop a followup program for educators who have travelled to Yad Vashem to learn how to teach the Holocaust.

"Yad Vashem is the No. 1 organization in the world for Holocaust education and commemoration, and we need to follow up experiences. We could set up conferences and provide continuing education."

In addition to the annual Yom Hashoah program at Earl Bales Park, which the Canadian Society organizes with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto – the largest in the world after the one in Jerusalem – it has a joint venture with the government of Ontario in which it brings honorees to Queen's Park who have rebuilt their lives after the Holocaust and have contributed to the community.

It also has archives, a library and artifacts, Sonshine said. "We are the go-to people, and we have it all at our fingertips."

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Tale of Mideast Jews can ease campus tension: prof

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Israeli peace activist Ada Aharoni said that informing people about the uprooting of Jews from Arab countries decades ago can be used as a tool to help ease tensions on campuses between Jewish and pro-Palestinian students.

Aharoni, an Israeli professor, poet, author of 27 books and the founder of the International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace (IFLAC), was in Toronto last week to take part in the inaugural Canadian Academic Friends of Israel conference.

Ada Aharoni

The March 8-9 conference, titled Emerging Trends in Anti-Semitism and Campus Discourse, was held at the University of Toronto and chaired by Ed Morgan, a U of T law professor.

The event, which featured speakers such as Liberal MP Irwin Cotler and Israel's ambassador to Canada, Miriam Ziv, was attended by some 120 professors, students and Jewish leaders.

Some of the issues explored included anti-Jewishness that may be disguised as anti-Zionism, as well as emerging narratives that affect campus communities and academic freedom, and the Zionist ideology itself.

Aharoni has taught at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology and the University of Haifa and founded IFLAC in 1999 to spread the culture of peace and build bridges between nations. She spoke at the conference about the uprooting of Jews from Arab countries and shared her story about being a Jewish refugee from Egypt.

"I presented it as a tool for students to be able to empower them, so when they hear that Palestinians were thrown out [of Israel], they'll know there were two migrations, not only one, in the mid-20th century," Aharoni said.

She said that in 1948, about 650,000 Palestinians fled Israel, while about 900,000 Jews from neighbouring Arab countries either fled or were thrown out of their homes and forced to leave all their possessions behind.

"I spoke about ethnic cleansing, because the Palestinians keep telling you about there was an ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from Israel, and it's not true. There was an ethnic cleansing of Jews in the Middle East. So few are left in those Arab countries," Aharoni said.

"Out of the 100,000 Jews in 1948, only 40 Jews are left in all of Egypt."

She urged the students at the conference to share this information with their peers, because, based on a case study she conducted when she was teaching at Penn State University, this information can help change the minds of people who have anti-Israel views.

She said she was teaching a class made up of North American, Israeli, Arab and Palestinian students, and she assigned a research paper that had to contain only objective facts and statistics about the fate of Jews from Arab countries.

"My goal was to find out if their opinions [about the Arab-Israeli conflict] would be changed," Aharoni said.

"By the last lesson, Palestinian students stood up and said… 'We checked all your statistics, and you know what, you're right… How come you Jews, who are supposed to be wise and intelligent, have kept all these facts in your drawers for more than 60 years?'" she recalled.

"I was so pleased, because my students understood what all the governments of Israel have never understood – that this [information] is really a tool."

She said her Palestinian students said this information made them feel like they weren't the only underdogs.

Aharoni said they told her that, "'Until now, we've been told the Nazis killed six million Jews and that's why you came and took our country. This has nothing to do with us – go to Germany. But when you come and tell us that half the citizens of Israel are Jews from Arab countries, that is a different story – we are responsible for what happened.'

"In Islamic philosophy, to be able to have peace, real peace, the side that has done wrong has to pay something concrete, and [the Palestinian students said] 'You have already paid when you were robbed of all your property in the Arab countries.'"

Aharoni recalled reading a poem she wrote titled The Second Exodus at a lecture she gave at the Penn State Hillel with both Jewish and Palestinian students in attendance.

The poem was about her father, who died of a heart attack after he found out that all his property, money and assets – even money he had set aside in a Swiss bank – had been confiscated by the Egyptian government.

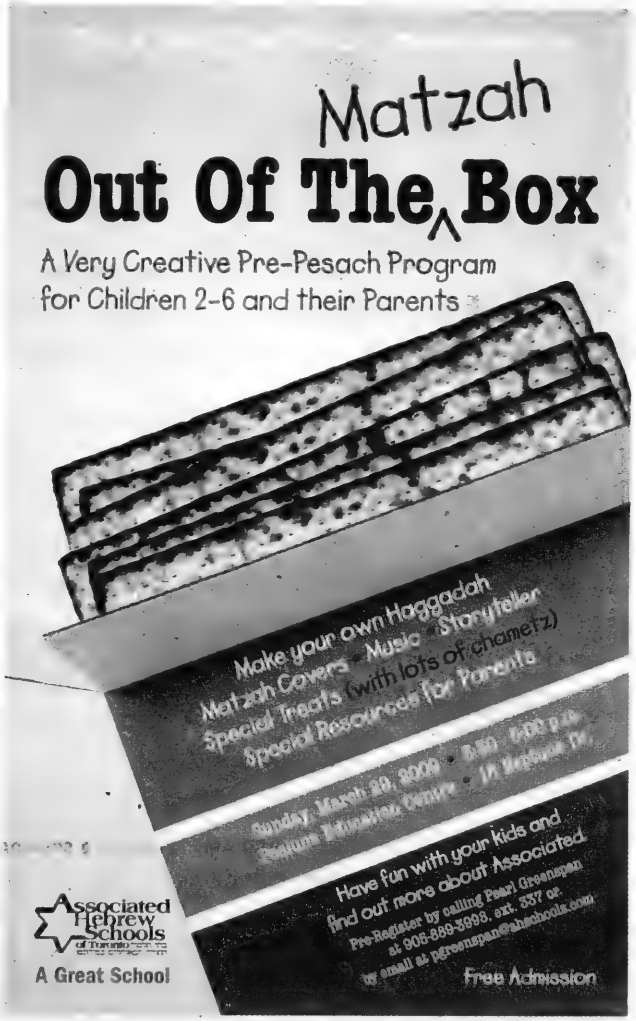
"Two Palestinian students wearing keffiyot had tears in their eyes, and one of them said, 'That is exactly what happened to my father.' Suddenly we were on the same side. We were not enemies anymore. We were refugees who had suffered from the Arab-Israeli conflict."

Aharoni said that there is a lot of Jewish history that people are simply unaware of, and becoming informed can help nations better understand each other and help the peace process along.

"Until now, we have been doing hasbara to the Americans, the Canadians, to the French, but not to the Arabs, and they are the ones who should listen to us. It's not with you that we want to make peace. We want to make peace with them," she said.

"Changing someone's attitude from hatred to understanding and harmony and co-operation is something that is happening all the time. But to be able to speak about it, you have to know."

VOLUNTEER PACKING: Students from the Montessori Jewish Day School helped pack Passover food boxes for National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto section's 26th annual Passover food drive. The boxes, filled with essentials for the seder and the week of Passover, are to be delivered by volunteer drivers on March 29. [Carolyn Blackman photo]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BBYO CONVENTION: Ten teens from Toronto represented BBYO's Lake Ontario region among 750 teen leaders who gathered in Long Branch, N.J., last month for BBYO's largest international convention in its 85-year history. The convention set the course for the youth-led movement's upcoming year.

CHAI SHOPPERS:

Girls from NCSY's bat mitzvah program shop for arts and crafts to donate to Chai Lifeline, which helps ill children. The girls assembled the crafts into kits to give to kids in hospitals. Pictured, from left, are Logan Roy, Naomi Stochinsky, Rachel Meyerowitz, Lyla Bronfman, Eilat Assif-Stopnicki and Marlie Clark.

DEBATING POLITICS: A group of teens took part in mock Israeli political party debates on March 4 at Shaarei Beth El Congregation in Oakville, in a program organized by the Regional Jewish Communities of Ontario. Each student researched and presented the perspective of a political party they were assigned, from left-wing Meretz Yachad to right-wing Israel Beitenu. The program culminated in a mock election and a discussion about results of the Feb. 10 Israeli election and the differences between the electoral systems of Israel and Canada. Pictured, from left, are Adam Polgar, Shaarei Beth El's Rabbi Stephen Wise, Heather Goodman, Amanda Marco, Ben Mayers, Raffi Moor, Evan Brock and Jacob Machan.

Greater Toronto Area

LEARNING ABOUT EACH OTHER: Zareinu Moveathon, the fundraising arm of the Zareinu Educational Centre for children with special needs, recently hosted a night for young professionals at Chalkers Pub, to encourage them to get involved and support kids with special needs in the community. The more than 50 people in attendance were given a sock to wear on one hand during the evening to give them a sense of what it's like for some Zareinu students who have difficulty with fine motor skills. Seen at the event are, from left, Liora Sturm, Kendra Dubyk, Hailey Remer, Shawna Samuel, Michelle English, Aaron English and Jonathan Samuel.

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE: Arielle Maze, a student at Tanenbaum CHAT in Vaughan accepts an honorable mention award from Morley Wolfe, centre, and Ray Buchowski, her school's assistant principal for general studies. The awards ceremony for Toronto Residents in Partnership's Morley Wolfe Youth Book Competition, "Challenging Racism and Celebrating Differences," took place March 5. The annual contest is open to high school students who create children's books on the theme of the contest. Maze's book is called True Colours. The overall winner was Nyssa Dalley from Sir Sandford Fleming Academy, who wrote Cats and their Owners.

WIRELESS AGE: From left, Grade 5 students Jennie Martow, Jessica Kline, Hannah Aviv and Batya Feder from Associated Hebrew Schools' Kamin Education Centre in Thornhill use their school's new wireless computer lab to review a lesson in Hebrew language arts. Consisting of 27 laptop computers, the wireless lab can be used in any classroom and in tandem with SMARTBoard interactive whiteboards.

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Life At Beth Tikvah Synagogue

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LUNCH & LEARN TUESDAYS

Lunch at 12:15 pm - Learn at 12:45 pm SPRING 2009

April 21 - Ellen Roseman
Tips for Tracking, Saving and Investing Your Money. Now that we're in an economic downturn, it's more important than ever to spend less and save more. Ellen Roseman has been writing about these topics for many years and has a few tricks up her sleeve. She will give best practices on smart money management in her talk. Ellen Roseman is a personal finance and consumer affairs columnist with the Toronto Star's business section and previously spent two decades at the Globe and Mail.

April 28 - Dr. Jacques Gauthier
is an international lawyer who completed his Ph.D. thesis relating to the status of Jerusalem in international law at the University of Geneva in 2007. He will discuss the delicate issues connected to the question of sovereignty over the Old City of Jerusalem.

May 5 - William Thorsell,
CEO of the Royal Ontario Museum. 'The Dead Sea Scroll Exhibit in Toronto – Behind the Scenes.' The Toronto exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls will run from June 27 2009 – January 9, 2010. Exhibit was created by joint efforts of the ROM and the Israel Antiquities Authority.

May 12 - 'Winston Churchill and the Jews.'
Our resident historian, **Gerald Ziedenberg,** tackles this fascinating area of history with expertise and sensitivity.

May 19 - Meir Shalev
is one of Israel's leading authors. **A Pigeon and A Boy**, published in 2007 won the Brenner Prize, Israel's highest literary recognition. Already translated into 17 languages, this is a mesmerizing novel of two love stories separated by half a century but connected by one enchanting act of devotion. Reviewed by **Rabbi Avraham Feder.**

May 26- Kirpans, Kippahs, Kashrut and other Krazy Topics
in the Canadian Courts: Ken Krupat discusses Canadian legal decisions affecting minority religious rights. What has been decided? What will the Courts be grappling with in the next few years?

June 2 - The Shanghai Jewish Ghetto
How 20,000 Jews escaped Nazi occupied Europe and made their way to the safe haven of Shanghai. Sculptor, artist and designer **Ian Leventhal** has made 18 trips to Shanghai over the last six years, exploring Jewish-Chinese history. In 2003 he received the Queen's Jubilee Medal for his work in saving the Jewish Ghetto area in Shanghai from certain destruction.

June 9 - 'Yiddish in Canada
past, present and future' with animated speaker **Rebecca Margolis**, assistant professor in the Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Program at the University of Ottawa, where her courses include Yiddish culture as well as Holocaust studies.

We acknowledge the generous sponsorship of this series by Helen Stollar.

Price for 8 programs: $124. **Price for 4 programs:** $75

Single tickets - $20 per session. By reservation only: Lunch & Learn Hotline 416-221-3433 ext. 352

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Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah Program

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Faye Schulman

Faye Schulman on the right with a Partisan friend

Faye Schulman will share her war time experiences where she served as forced photographer for the Nazis, and then as a partisan in the woods for two years with a brigade on the Polish-Russian border leading the fight against the enemy.
It is an amazing story of strength, resistance and courage.

Tuesday, April 21, 7:30 pm

Film on Faye's life
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Program will be of particular interest to Jewish Young Adults

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Beth Tikvah Synagogue has arranged
2 guided tours with private docents of the

Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit

at the Royal Ontario Museum

Sunday July 5 and Wednesday July 15, 11:00 a.m.
For information phone 416-221-3433 ext. 300

An Evening to Remember Frances and Morris Bitterman

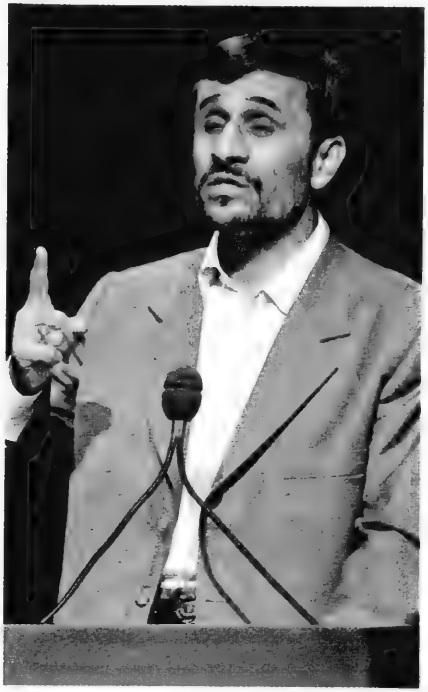
Monday, April 27, 8:00 p.m.

Morris (Moishe) Bitterman was the only member of his extended family to survive the Shoah. He left for Palestine on the famed refugee ship, The Exodus, and served as an Israeli soldier along side those who were committed to founding the new State of Israel.

He immigrated to Canada in 1952 and became our Ritual Director from 1976-1995 where as part of his duties he prepared countless B'nai Mitzvah candidates.

Frances Bitterman was a pillar of support for Moishe, a volunteer in the shul and a kind soul.

Everyone is invited on Monday April 27th to commemorate the lives of two exemplary Jews who were an integral part of the Beth Tikvah Community and to hear their compelling stories.



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Iran not just Israel's problem

Continued from page 3

To illustrate the "perfect description" of the Iranian paradox, Menashri repeated a saying that one of his colleagues in Tehran taught him that states Iranians "have freedom of expression, they just don't have freedom after expression."

Still, Menashri insists that dialogue between the United States and Iran could be a major step toward reigning in Iran's hegemonic ambitions in the Middle East.

Professor welcomes dialogue with U.S.

If America successfully enters talks with Tehran, he said, Iran will be perceived as negotiating with "the Great Satan," something that will sow doubt in all of its proxies.

He said that U.S. President [Barack] Obama is opting "for dialogue, which I don't have anything against. While it may not lead us anywhere, I think it's good. It at least sends a clear message to the Iranian and American people that the U.S. sincerely looked for a way to deal with Iran peacefully."

Such a gesture may make it easier to create a "unified, world opinion" and take "action" against Iran going forward, Menashri said.

"The most important thing is to send a message to the youth of Iran," he said, because at this stage, the country is "very sensitive" to pressure as civil society grows more powerful and gains more influence.

Though he remains optimistic about dealing with Iran peacefully, Menashri said he recognizes that time "is not in our favour," and he would have liked to see dialogue established long ago.

"You need to convince Russia, China [to side against Iran]. And who's going to do it?" he asked. "In my view, people in Iran, ultimately, will not be good for this."

A belligerent Iran, Menashri said, is not something that should be handled by Israel alone.

Menashri suggested that Iran's rulers still have no pragmatic reason to accept the Jewish state.

"Ideologically, the Iranian regime doesn't view Judaism as a nationality," he said. "Raising the [issue] of Israel is very important to any Islamist leader… to unify the emotions of those [supporters] around them… and retain power. Ahmadinejad used Israel as the ticket to his leadership."

Menashri said he belongs to the Israeli camp that doesn't consider Iran an existential threat to his country, but he conceded it's a "great challenge" to hold that position.

Of all the solutions being proposed to the problem of Iran, the one he doesn't advocate is unilateral Israeli action.

"In a general sense, the problem of Iran's nuclear program is not Israel's alone. I think Israel should speak less about it, because this [perpetuates the idea] that it is Israel's problem alone," Menashri said.

"Today, Arab countries' number one problem is not Israel, it's Iran. There's tension between the moderate Arab world and Iran. I'm hopeful that Saudi Arabia, Jordan… will react to the emerging power in Shiite Iran."

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Exodus Experience a multi-sensory tour of Pesach story

By LEILA SPEISMAN
Staff Reporter

Don't let the concrete, factory-like structure fool you. Or the setting – Downsview Park, in the wilds of what used to be the Downsview Air Force Base.

Once inside the building, you encounter The Exodus Experience, a multi-sensory tour of the story of Pesach. Under the auspices of Tzivos HaShem, the youth arm of the worldwide Lubavitch movement, the program has been shown around the world, from Sydney, Australia, to Los Angeles, South Africa, Montreal (eight years ago) and many places in the United States.

Rabbi Yonah Vilenkin, who has headed Toronto's Tzivos HaShem since 2003, said that participants go through in groups, rather than individually, and he recommended that people reserve ahead.

The second part of The Exodus Experience is Chabad's popular annual model matzah bakery.

Last week, students from the Zareinu Educational Centre, a school that provides special education and individualized therapies for children who have physical and developmental challenges, and a group of seniors took The Exodus Experience tour. They enjoyed the impressive sound effects, the sight of a Jewish slave bemoaning his sorry state in front of the pyramids, the dramatic lights flashing, the plague of frogs – including ones coming down from the ceiling – and pharaoh's advisers going through the lists of Egyptian gods to the ABC song from Sesame Street.

Going from room to room, you walk through sand, straw and stones. As we passed through the divided Red Sea, we saw goldfish swimming through walls of water. The shrill blast of

Scene from the Exodus Experience

a shofar punctuated the giving of the Torah.

The smiles, giggles and laughs of the audience during the tour showed everyone had a good time.

The entire program, including the tour and the matzah factory, takes about two hours. It runs from March 12 to 31. The cost is $12, and group discounts are offered.

For show times or reservations, call Rabbi Vilenkin at 416-661-0650.

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A letter to the German chancellor

By H. DAVID KIRK

I am writing to you as a German Jew, born in 1918 and abroad since 1934. You have reawakened images of my childhood in Germany and memories of my forward-looking and brave mother.

Guest Voice

Much like you, who are able to see the current renewal of anti-Semitism as a threat to Jews, my mother early on recognized the ever-darkening future in the Germany of 1933. Like my mother, who began preparing my brothers and me for a life abroad, you know how to adapt to difficult circumstances. Thus, when you received Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's letter with its hateful threats against Israel, you refused to respond.

Today, Israel's very existence is threatened by Iran's nearly perfected weapons of mass destruction, and by its president's virulent threats to wipe Israel off the map. With these threats growing ever stronger and closer, one is bound to ask: what is to be done? Surprisingly, my work in the sociology of adoptive kinship, in spite of its very different theme, gives a clue: catastrophic events can sometimes be transformed into opportunities. In that context, I propose a new kind of non-financial *wiedergutmachung* (compensation), the essence of which is found in the title of my book, Shared Fate.

If Germany were to acknowledge the threat that it, like other western nations, faces from militant Islam, it could recognize a "shared fate" situation with embattled Israel. Thus, if Germans understood that their country would be no safer than other western nations if Iran had nuclear weapons, they might want to declare themselves in support of Israel – by diplomacy if possible, by force if necessary.

In the era of persecution and genocide, none of the democracies dared to step forward to protect Jews. Even today, such a step would require great courage and conviction and call for the kind of leadership that you, Chancellor Merkel, have already exhibited. In that new role, Germany would usher in a new and world-shaking relationship between itself and the Jewish people.

H. David Kirk is a writer living in Brentwood Bay, B.C.

שיאר ענינ

גידי קורן וחברים

קנדה שכדאי לראות

אני מוצא שישראלים רבים מקיימים את סיסמת הערוץ הישראלי בטלויזיה: "לחיות כאן-להרגיש שם", ומחוברים יומיומית לתכניות המשודרות בישראל, החל מחדשות הבוקר ועד ללונדון וקירשנבאום בלילה. אין בזה כמובן כל רע, וזה מראה את המובן מאליו: יכול אדם לצאת מישראל, אך אין הוא יכול להוציא את ישראל מתוכו. קשה בגיל מבוגר להתרגל להומור חדש, בשפה זרה, לתרבות דיבור ונושאים חדשים. ישראלים מדברים בהרבה להט על התמוטטותה של מפלגת העבודה, אבל לא מצאתי עדיין ישראלי שיתווכח בלהט על התמוטטותה של המפלגה הליבראלית הקנדית.

ובכל זאת-אם החלטתם לחיות במקום חדש-כדאי לנסות להבין את דופק התרבות המקומית, מעבר לדילים במרכזי המכירות, שהפכו למוזיאונים המודרניים. "מה קנית וכמה זה עלה" הוא הנושא השכיח של פגישות ישראלים בגלות טורונטו.

השבוע ראינו שני סרטים קנדיים חדשים שמביאים את קנדה בצורה מאוד משכנעת ונוגעת ללב. לטעמי אלה הם סרטי חובה למי שמנסה להבין את נשמתה של הארץ החדשה שלו.

The Necessities of Life הוא סיפורו של אסקימואי מאזור הקוטב הצפוני שמועבר לקוויבק סיטי בשנת 1952 לטיפול במחלת השחפת שאובחנה אצלו. בבית החולים דובר הצרפתית אין אפילו נפש אחת שמדברת בשפת האינואיט והוא מנסה לברוח ומסרב טיפול. ממש על סף המות מציל אותו ילד אסקימואי חולה שחפת שמדבר גם צרפתית.

זהו סרט מדהים על תקשורת בלי מלים, על הדיעות הקדומות נגד ילידים, ועל הרבה אהבה וחמלה.

עשר בסולם קורן

הסרט **One Week** הוא סיפורו של צעיר קנדי תושב טורונטו שזוהה אצלו סרטן סופני והוא יוצא למסע מדהים לרוחבה של קנדה. פגישותיו האקראיות עם אנשים פשוטים לאורך הדרך, בנגד הלחץ של ארוסתו ומשפחתו לשוב העירה כדי לנסות להציל את חייו-יוצרים מתח קולנועי נהדר ומרהיב. עוד עשר בסולם קורן.

תושיית האם היהודיה

מוטי הזמין את אימו לארוחת ערב בדירת הסטודנטים שלו. במהלך הערב התרשמה האם שהיחסים בין מוטי לבין אחת השותפות לדירה, טליה, חורגת מיחסי חברות רגילים. מוטי שראה את מבטי אמו, אמר לה: "אמא, אני יודע מה את חושבת, אבל תאמיני לי, טליה ואני סך הכל חברים טובים".

שבוע אחרי הביקור אמרה טליה למוטי: "מאוד מוזר, מאז שאמך היתה כאן-חסרה לי המצקת של המרק. האם סביר שהיא לקחה את זה בטעות?"

מוטי חשב שזה מאוד לא הגיוני, אבל החליט לבדוק. הוא שלח לאמו מייל ושאל:

"אמא, אני לא אומר שלקחת את המצקת של המרק, אבל מאז שהיית כאן-היא חסרה."

כעבור יומיים ענתה לו אמו:

"אני לא אומרת שאתה ישן בלילות עם טליה, אבל אם היא היתה ישנה בחדר שלה, היא היתה מוצאת את המצקת מתחת לסדין".

אבל שישאר בינינו.

דור לדור יביע אומר

תודה לפנינה על הקטע החכם הבא.

סטודנט צעיר, קולני ושחצן נכנס לשיחה עם איש זקן על שפת הים. הוא ניסה להסביר לזקן שהדור של הישישים גדל בלי טלויזיה, לויינים, אינטרנט וכל השאר, ועל כן אין זה פלא שגישתם לעולם כל כך פרימיטיבית.

אחרי שתיקה ארוכה ענה לו הזקן:

"אתה צודק, בני, לנו לא היו כל הדברים האלה ולכן נאלצנו להמציא אותם. מה אתה, שחצן קטן שלי, עושה כדי להשאיר משהו משמעותי לדור הבא?....."

Boys turn 'a regular day' into musical fundraiser

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Five Grade 12 students at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto have taken a play that four of them wrote as a Grade 11 drama project and expanded it into an 80-minute musical about teenagers dealing with issues including romance and drugs. They will present it as a fundraiser March 23 and 24.

The five 17-year-olds, who coalesced into a group of best friends almost two years ago, are "extremely – I repeat extremely – talented students," Josh Sable, director of student activities at the school's Wallenberg campus, wrote to The CJN in an e-mail.

Ryan Peters, Jeremy Chad, Ben Deverett and Noam Tomaschoff wrote the original 40-minute play, for which they received a mark of 100 per cent.

Their friend Russell Citron, who enjoys writing and public speaking, didn't take drama last year, but "naturally, we wanted him to be part of it," said Chad in a joint interview with four of the five last week at the Wilmington Avenue school.

Tomaschoff – who has studied at Toronto's Randolph Academy for the Performing Arts and taken part in a summer program at the Lee Strasberg Institute of New York University, where he has been accepted to study acting next year – was home sick.

The play, titled Just a Regular Day, includes 13 original songs, and features the five boys as well as four female students. Most of the cast members also appeared in the school's annual musical, said Chad, who is student council president and plans to study engineering at university next year.

A CD of the music will be sold at the show.

Peters, who plays piano and has acted in community theatre, wrote the music, and the lyrics were a collaborative effort.

Deverett – whose main academic interest is science, but who enjoys acting and singing and has appeared on the children's television show *Ricky's Room* – used a software application to make the music sound as if it were being played by a live band.

"I like catchy music," said Peters, citing show tunes and the works of Elton John and Billy Joel.

The boys credited their Grade 11 drama teacher, Brad Mittelman, for encouraging them to go ahead with the project, although it didn't fit the parameters of the "anthology" he had assigned them. "I think some stricter teachers would have said no," Peters said.

The play is "totally slice of life," Deverett said. The students denied, however, that it reflected their real-life experiences.

"In our [real] lives it's us huddled around a piano," Citron said.

The play is infused with more drama than their own lives: Tomaschoff plays a "confused adolescent" who is interested in a girl, but she has changed over the summer and become "cool." When he tries to approach her at a party, everything backfires, Deverett explained.

Everything begins on "just a regular day," Chad said.

Without revealing the plot twists – and there are several – the play's lesson is, "Be yourself," Deverett said.

Tickets are $12 in advance, $18 at the door. The show will be held at the Crescent School Theatre, 2365 Bayview Ave.

The students plan to donate the profits to the performing and visual arts fund at TanenbaumCHAT, as well as to JACS, the organization that deals with suffering caused by drugs and alcohol in Toronto's Jewish community.

For tickets to the show or for more information, call Wendy Peters at 416-315-1118, or e-mail wendypeters@rogers.com.

Cast members of Just a Regular Day are TanenbaumCHAT students, on floor, Gillian Singer and Noam Tomaschoff; seated from left, Ryan Peters, Jeremy Chad with Danyse Golick behind him, Ben Deverett and Baylee Shurman; and standing at back, Russell Citron and Ashley Gould.

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From Jews in Germany to German Jews?: Jews in Germany Today
with
Professor Mark Webber
Department of German Studies,
York University

7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, March 25, 2009

בית צדק Beth Tzedec Congregation
Beth Tzedec Congregation, 1700 Bathurst St., Toronto

Information Seniors Need to Know During these Uncertain Economic Times

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EVENT DETAILS
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Monday, March 23rd
6:30pm - 7:30pm
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JEWISH EDUCATION SERVICES QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Recently, UJA Federation announced important changes in the delivery of educational services, affecting the Mercaz and financial support for Jewish education. Since the announcement, many community members have sent us their questions and concerns.
Here are responses to those inquiries.

Q. What are the changes?
A. UJA Federation will be streamlining the Mercaz, our education department, and, at the same time, increasing financial support for Jewish education by:
- Adding $500,000 to tuition subsidies over the next year and a half
- Setting aside a substantial sum of money for education projects
- Maintaining and, hopefully, increasing financial support for supplementary schools and special education.

Q. What will happen to the Mercaz?
A. The Mercaz will still exist, with a smaller staff, but, for the most part, it will be not be delivering programs in the traditional way. In partnership with our schools, it will be serving as a catalyst for program delivery by other means, cutting down on overhead and enhancing quality. Our goal is strengthening the capacity of our excellent schools to offer programs and services themselves. The community can be rest assured that priority programs and services will be maintained and delivered with the same superior quality.

Q. Will the schools be expected to pay for programs and services currently provided by the Mercaz?
A. We are setting aside a large pool of funds to pay for worthy projects that UJA Federation and the schools agree to undertake.

Q. How will these changes affect school tuitions?
A. We understand the financial burden of school tuitions. That's why we are increasing tuition subsidies by $500,000 to more than $8 million, in addition to an extra $2 million from the Julia & Henry Koschitzky Fund for schools that provide tuition subsidies. Our new approach will offer a stronger forum for discussing with the schools creative solutions to the tuition challenge. It is a complex issue because, even with tuitions as they are, our Jewish schools are under severe financial pressure.

Q. Are these changes related to the current recession?
A. No. These changes would have taken place regardless of economic conditions. In fact, discussions about the role of the Mercaz have been ongoing long before the economic downturn. Contrary to rumours, this new direction is not the result of a Mercaz funding shortfall or any other similar considerations. It is motivated by the benefits of redistributing the administrative costs of a large, centralized education department to increased direct support for children, parents and schools.

Q. When will we know more details about the new Mercaz and how these changes will be implemented?
A. Over the next few weeks, UJA Federation professional and lay leaders will be meeting with Mercaz personnel, school officials and others who are most affected by our new approach. Additional details should be available within a couple of months.

We welcome your questions and suggestions. Please e-mail info@ujafed.org.

UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO

Published as a community service by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

One COOL Day warms hearts

By Alana Getzler

More than 100 members of UJA Federation's Impact Toronto division came together recently with one common goal – helping others.

Impact Toronto caters to the "hands on" social and philanthropic needs of Jewish Toronto's 25 – 40 year olds

The occasion for the mitzvah-making was Impact Toronto's semi-annual One COOL Day initiative - chaired by Richard Goldhar - which sees volunteers roll up their sleeves and volunteer at a number of community organizations including several UJA Federation partner agencies, that help Toronto's vulnerable. The experience also teaches participants about the GTA's wealth of organizations that assist others.

Participants had the choice of many such organizations on Sunday, March 1, including Reena, JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services) Toronto and Zareinu Educational Centre.

"The clients certainly enjoyed their time with the volunteers, and they were a great help to myself and my staff as they helped with a carnival for clients of the agency," said Michelle Anbar, program coordinator for outreach and respite services at Reena. "We all had fun and played BINGO with the members,"

One COOL Day 2009 participants pose at the Toronto Wildlife Centre volunteer site. (Middle row, l-r) Yael Manor, Charlene Somer, Kelly Becker, Kevin Rosenfarb, and Annat Scheinbach. (Front row) Brett Selbo, and Kip Parker, TWC Project Manager.

explained Jennifer Brodlieb, the One COOL Day volunteer project coordinator at the Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living. "Positive feedback has been offered from not only the volunteers and the agencies, but the beneficiaries of the volunteer day as well."

After hours of volunteering, the day culminated in a "Food and Shmooze", at The House. Opening its doors about 3 years ago on Toronto's Eglinton Avenue, The House has quickly grown into one of the city's most popular and relaxing interactive places to explore Judaism as it pertains to the 21st century.

Over pizza, participants had a chance to interact with one another, share their stories of the day and engage with Rabbi Rafi Lipner, The House's Director, in a discussion about random acts of kindness.

"One COOL Day was a tremendous success this year," explained Steven Ekstein, chair, Hands on Toronto (HOT), a program of Impact Toronto. "This event gave young Jewish adults an opportunity to help those in need and gave them great exposure to the organizations supported by their donations. The hope is that the introduction to these agencies has whetted the appetites of those interested in helping out, and has offered them the chance to learn about how they can further their commitment to the community."

For more information about Impact Toronto programming please contact Alana Getzler at agetzler@ujafed.org, or 416-635-2883 ext. 5120.

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Conservative group seeks larger role in movement's future

By BEN HARRIS
JTA

NEW YORK — The leadership of the Conservative movement's synagogue arm has acceded to a request for an "urgent" meeting from a new coalition of clergy and lay people to discuss new strategic directions for the organization.

The meeting was scheduled to take place this week in New York.

"I look forward to working with this group," Ray Goldstein, the president of the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism, told JTA. "I'm really excited about having their passion and willingness to work to strengthen the United Synagogue, and through the United Synagogue, the Conservative movement."

The proposed meeting was triggered by a letter sent to Goldstein by a group that includes officials of some of the movement's largest and most vibrant congregations. Among them are Rabbi Philip Scheim of Toronto's Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl of Beth Tzedec Congregation is also a signatory, although his synagogue – formerly the largest affiliated Conservative congregation in North America, with 2,650 member families – broke ties with United Synagogue last year.

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl stressed that he is participating in the new group as an individual.

"I care about the future of the Conservative movement, and the dissatisfaction of my congregation with United Synagogue is part of that larger issue," Rabbi Frydman-Kohl said.

"We feel that the larger institutions of the Conservative movement are in need of 're-engineering,'" he added. "This has been in development for a long time. It's not a reflection of the economy. The economic situation may make it more urgent."

Among the issues he sees as most pressing are delivery of services at the congregational level, and the way that the United Synagogue "projects a vision of Conservative Judaism that is vigorous and that engages people."

Rabbi Philip Scheim

Rabbi Scheim also said that congregations want practical support, but at the same time, the goal is for the group to work with United Synagogue leadership to articulate and promote "a compelling vision that will captivate the Jewish world."

Rabbi Scheim said the new group is the first of its kind in bringing together 25 of "the most powerful congregations in the movement."

He said he was optimistic about the prospect of working together with United Synagogue leaders.

The letter asserted that only fundamental change in the United Synagogue would enable its future success.

"We don't believe that it can happen if 'business as usual' reigns, with merely a change in the identity of the leadership," the letter stated.

The Conservative movement, once the United States' largest synagogue denomination but since overtaken by the Reform movement, has been anguishing over its future for years. But a major leadership overhaul – at present, the three major arms either have recently installed new leaders or are preparing to – has sparked hope that the movement's fortunes are primed for a turnaround.

About 50 rabbis, cantors and synagogue lay leaders, brought together under the banner of Hayom: Coalition for the Transformation of Conservative Judaism, signed the letter to the United Synagogue.

The group, which also includes well-known pulpit rabbis such as David Wolpe of Los Angeles and Gordon Tucker of New York, was formed last summer in reaction to Goldstein's decision to keep the selection of a new United Synagogue executive strictly an internal process.

Rabbi Steven Wernick was tapped last week to lead the Conservative movement's synagogue association. Wernick, spiritual leader at Adath Israel in suburban Philadelphia, will succeed Rabbi Jerome Epstein as executive vice-president of the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism. In 2007, Arnold Eisen assumed the chancellorship of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Rabbi Julie Schonfeld will become the chief executive of the Rabbinical Assembly this summer.

Continued on page 25

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS
...A WAR OF IDEAS

ARYEH GREEN,
Director of MediaCentral, Jerusalem discusses global media coverage of Israel's operation against Hamas in Gaza, why "the news that's fit to print" seems so biased against Israel, and how his media-liaison organization works with journalists to help them report accurately from the field.

JOHN THOMPSON,
Director, Mackenzie Institute, author, and well-known authority on terrorism and security, will moderate.

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United Synagogue 'marches to its own drummer'

Continued from page 24

As opposed to JTS, which invited representatives of the movement's other organizations to sit on the search committee that picked Eisen, the United Synagogue kept the process closed. The committee charged with finding the United Synagogue's new chief executive did not even include a pulpit rabbi.

"Needless to say, that didn't sit well with us," said Rabbi Michael Siegel, spiritual leader of a large Chicago congregation and the Hayom chair. "We decided to begin a process to find a more direct way to speak with the leadership of the United Synagogue and to begin a process of developing a long-range plan."

Siegel said there is a "general dissatisfaction" in the movement regarding the services that communities receive from the United Synagogue. The organization, he said, suffers from a gap of creative strategic thinking. Hayom's objective, he added, is to create "an outside agitating force" to press for change.

"The United Synagogue is far less inclusive than the other" arms of the movement, said one Conservative rabbi who signed the Hayom letter. "The United Synagogue deserves the attacks, honestly. They have failed in a major way to meet the major needs of Conservative Jews."

In fact, the United Synagogue did initiate a strategic planning process that yielded a 2004 report by the management consultant Jacob Ukeles. Among Ukeles' recommendations was that the United Synagogue bring representatives from the major congregations to its board.

"It's very much an organization that marches to its own drummer," Ukeles said of the United Synagogue. "It tends to be very insular, very self-contained."

Goldstein, who has been accused of shelving the Ukeles proposals or acting on them too slowly, rejected the criticism, noting that the organization's bylaws require that the board include representatives from the other arms of the movement, as well as regional delegates that represent current or recent synagogue presidents.

"Some of them actually attend our meetings and participate," Goldstein said. "Some do not."

As to the search for a new executive, Goldstein conceded that keeping the process closed may have been an error, but said he had sought informal input from the movement's other arms, including from Eisen.

"I never received a call," he said.

With files from Frances Kraft

Arnold Eisen

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Jewish Life

Echoes of the expulsion in Havana

By RABBI YEHIEL BEN AYON

Old Havana is a glorious place that's frozen in time. Even after many decades of unfortunate decay, the exquisite beauty of its buildings, plazas and boulevards, and the intricacies and detail in façade after façade, bear silent testimony to a grand era of elegance and finesse that could justly place it alongside other capitals, such as Prague and Vienna.

Through A Sephardi Window

There are precious few Jews in all of Cuba – perhaps less than 1,000, I'm told. The sight of a very visibly Jewish Jew walking these streets must have been as incongruous to the Cubans as the sight of all that family laundry hung out to dry over so many exquisite Rococo balconies was to me.

No matter. One soon discovers that, by and large, Cubans are by nature blessed with an upbeat and respectful disposition. My presence, once noticed, resulted in the temporary halting of conversation, then silent stares followed by continued and hushed commentary, explaining amongst themselves the particulars of the subject matter – me, a visible Jew.

I am quite certain that others like me have had similar experiences. What was dissimilar, however, is that I am quite fluent in Spanish – actually, it's my mother tongue. The sight of a Jew is one thing, but a Jew that smiles back while saying "*Ola que tal!*" – "Hi! How are you?" – is something else altogether. Language, especially when correctly pronounced and nuanced, is a very powerful connector.

But this is not at all my point. What I wish to retell is something that occurred to me no less than three times in as many days of my stay in Havana. After smiles and pleasantries were exchanged, I was informed by native Cubans on three different occasions that they, too, are Jews!

Well, they're Jews, but not really Jews. In each of these instances (with two women, one man), they went on to share that they were direct descendants of Jews of Spain forced either into expulsion or into quasi-Catholic observance – a fascinating fact that somehow was transmitted for 500 years.

One often hears comments that the fallout from the atrocities of the Holocaust has in no way concluded, but that the catastrophic damage tragically continues, and continues to manifest itself in survivors today and into the foreseeable future in so many heartbreaking ways.

I couldn't help but similarly sigh upon hearing these declarations that descendants of Conversos carry around for generations past and future – morsels of information, whether factual or otherwise.

Groups must change or face extinction

By JONATHAN MIRVIS

Guest Voice

The recent economic meltdown has created havoc among non-profit organizations that are totally dependent on philanthropic dollars. Many organizations have developed a business model entirely dependent on philanthropy, and these organizations stand to suffer most if the economy continues its downward slide.

In times when finances were abundant, this model was successful particularly among Jewish organizations, enabling them to provide social services to the community that many could not afford. Now that resources are limited, how can these organizations survive?

Three key strategies seem to come to the fore.

The first is to focus on large pools of small donors who support the endeavours of the organization. They may be past beneficiaries or their families who appreciate the social value the organization is generating.

Jonathan Mirvis

A second is to focus on earned income. It's critical that these organizations examine their inventory of services and affix fees for services or products where possible.

A third is seeking government contracts that are awarded to organizations that provide social services to the general public. While the financial support from this source may be considerable, in this article we will limit ourselves to discussing the ramifications of the first two strategies.

In suggesting the two strategies, we are assuming that the average citizen in the new economy will continue to seek products or services of value, will be willing to pay for them, and support their development and dissemination, if requested. While choices may be far more discriminatory than in the past, people ultimately will continue to make purchases and contribute financially to those organizations they value.

The common denominator of these approaches is that for organizations to survive, they will have to be relevant and meaningful to those they serve and be able to compete in the marketplace. This will require a radical shift in thinking by the leaders of the organizations.

In the former world, there could be a clear distinction between those who were being served and those who were the prime sources of income. In some situations, this reached extreme proportions, where organizations were dependent on one family or a number of families who dictated the priorities of the organization, even though this may not have been in the best interests of their constituency.

Since it was far easier to raise large amounts from single donors than it was to raise small amounts from multiple donors, the multiple small donors often have been ignored in favour of the larger. This has led to a systemic danger whereby policy may be dictated by the powerful few who are not necessarily in touch with the market needs.

In the new economy, the economic future of these organizations may be dependent on their constituency. Thus, these are the first questions that must be asked: who is our constituency and what do they value?

If these organizations fail to be relevant to their constituency and meet its needs, they may find themselves bereft of support, leading to their ultimate extinction.

Thus the new economy may well lead to a healthy democratization of organizations, leading to a new relationship between the organization and those being served. The constituency will see itself not only as beneficiaries but as "owners," and the organization's leaders will be far more answerable to this constituency, preventing it from making unilateral decisions that may not be in their interests.

It is the "small change" that will drive this big change, ensuring that we emerge from this economic crisis stronger than ever. – *JTA*

Jonathan Mirvis is a lecturer at Hebrew University's Melton Centre and teaches social entrepreneurship to MBA, non-profit management and education students.

Jewish Life

Students volunteer in impoverished community

CLASS ACT
By Daniel Held

I recently led a group of students from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto to the small mountain community of Franklin, W. Va., where we spent a week volunteering with Habitat for Humanity.

Working alongside some of the poorest of an impoverished community, we helped renovate trailers and homes for those living in substandard housing. The trip to the community of Franklin, where 20 per cent of homes are without running water or electricity, proved to be an eye-opening experience for our students, exposing them to the harsh realities of poverty faced by too many in our world.

My team worked on renovating a trailer. Seeing the temporary nature of the structure and the cramped and dingy quarters was an education in itself for us.

Our main task was to remodel the trailer to meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act as, in the coming months, the elderly owner would lose the use of his legs to diabetes. Along with lessons on how to tear down walls, remove and replace flooring, install a toilet, and use a hammer, saw and drill, we learned about the triple threat of poverty, malnutrition and inaccessible health care.

The lessons of the trip extend far beyond the volunteer work. Our first task upon arriving in Franklin was to kasher the kitchen and then to unpack the endless boxes of pots, pans and dishes we had brought with us. Through careful planning, we had determined what food we would need to bring with us, and with the help of the supermarket manager who had scoured the store looking for the kosher symbols we had faxed him, what we could buy locally. For many students, these lessons in keeping a kosher kitchen were first-time experiences.

It was also the first time that many students were responsible for cooking and serving their own meals and cleaning up. While cooking for 40 is certainly different than preparing the average family meal, every student took his or her turn in the kitchen, chopping vegetables, scrambling eggs and cleaning dishes. One parent sent me an e-mail after the trip, telling me that her daughter, after realizing how much work goes into cooking, has started to help prepare dinner at home.

Even before our large, red coach bus thundered into town, declaring our presence, many of the locals knew about the group of Jews from Canada who were coming to volunteer.

A few weeks before we left Toronto, I received a call from Pastor Craig Richter. He told me that many of his parishioners had never met a Jew, and he was hoping that we might find a way to connect our communities. On Thursday afternoons during Lent, the community comes together for a luncheon and so, during our week in Franklin, our students catered a kosher lunch for the local churches and we shared the meal and stories of their lives.

While we were preparing for the trip, many people asked me why we had to travel to West Virginia when issues of homelessness are so prevalent in our own community. It is true that there is much work to be done here at home, and I hope that the trip will serve as a catalyst for our students to engage in more volunteer work.

Often, however, it is the group experience that is the pivotal piece of education. We could teach about Israel without a trip to Israel, about keeping kosher without a kitchen, or about Shabbat during the week. Living these experiences, however, adds a dimension of learning that cannot be articulated in the sterile setting of a classroom.

On that subject, writer and activist Jane Jacobs once said, "That is why we have cooking classes and cooking demonstrations, as well as cookbooks. That is why we have apprenticeships, internships, student tours and on-the-job training, as well as manuals and textbooks."

I could teach about volunteerism, tikkun olam and chesed in Toronto, but travelling to West Virginia brought the experience alive, gave it a context and a sense of purpose.

The blessing of the sun, Part 2

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

We continue to look at Birkat HaChamah, the blessing of the sun, to be recited on April 8 and once again, after a 28-year wait, in the year 2037.

The actual blessing for Birkat HaChamah is brief: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who re-enacts the works of creation." However, a longer ceremony with readings from Psalms, Genesis, Jeremiah and other traditional sources has been formulated.

Several sites have prepared the text for downloading – some with commentary. The Kehillaton site has done a great job at creating a six-page document with Hebrew alongside English translation. **[tinyurl.com/chamah12]** Yeshiva.org.il has prepared two versions: one for Jews of Ashkenazi and Sephardi origin **[tinyurl.com/chamah15]** and another for Edot Hamizrach, including Jews from Iraq. **[tinyurl.com/chamah17]** As well, you can download a comprehensive 95-page booklet, a compilation of original-source documents from the Shulchan Aruch, the Talmud and elsewhere. **[tinyurl.com/chamah13]**

Massekhet HaChamah was prepared on behalf of the Conservative movement's Commission on Social Justice and Public Policy. The 68-page document is a collection of halachic and aggadic texts dealing with the sun. Since this year's Birkat HaChamah coincides with Passover's Fast of the First-Born, the brochure also includes a block of text which, when studied, releases first-borns from the obligation to fast. **[tinyurl.com/chamah14]**

There are also some good online classes that take advantage of audio and video to highlight relevant sections from Mishneh Brurah **[tinyurl.com/chamah 31]** and the Rambam. **[tinyurl.com/chamah 25]**

Most of these sites point out that the Birkat HaChamah ceremony concludes with the familiar Aleinu prayer that describes how idolatry should be removed from the earth. **[tinyurl.com/chamah18]** As many sites point out, Birkat HaChamah must not be considered sun worship. "The blessing is addressed to God, the creator of the sun – and all else. Jewish tradition absolutely forbids worshipping or praying to any entity other than the one God – and numerous times the Bible singles out the sun as one of those entities we may not worship!" **[tinyurl.com/chamah22]**

The last time Birkat HaChamah was observed was on April 8, 1981. It seems that a group of early birds rose for a spectacular view of the rising sun (and New York City) as they congregated atop the Empire State Building at 5 a.m. The invitation to the event has been preserved online. **[tinyurl.com/chamah30]** A JTA report quotes an account of the event from the New York Times. **[tinyurl.com/chamah29]**

If anything, this year's event will be getting even more attention as many people emphasize the importance of caring for and respecting the environment. Rabbi Arthur Waskow points out that on Shabbat HaGadol, prior to Birkat HaChamah, we will be reading from the Prophet Malachi, "who 2,500 years ago spoke forth a vision of the future, at once ominous and hopeful." Ominous, when the prophet foretells: "That day is at hand, burning like an oven." In Rabbi Waskow's interpretation, this alludes to a "global climate crisis – the overheating, scorching, burning, of the earth." And hopeful, when we read that a "sun of justice shall arise, with healing in its rays," or according to Rabbi Waskow, "a healing from the use of solar energy and the other sustainable sources of renewable energy." **[tinyurl.com/chamah26]**

If you are planning to spend Passover in the holy city of Safed, you will also have the opportunity to participate in the Birkat HaChamah Festival. The week-long celebrations kick off with an April 8 sunrise ceremony at 6:17 a.m. at the Citadel of Safed. Over the course of the next week, there will be poetry readings, workshops and displays of alternative solar ovens. The site also has directions for related crafts such as building a Jewish Star Sundial **[tinyurl.com/chamah28]** and a Solar Ner Tamid, Eternal Flame. **[tinyurl.com/chamah27]**

One particularly intriguing festival project is the series of mirrors that have been installed along mountaintop ridges in Israel. As the sun rises, this will initiate a series of solar reflections "ultimately uniting Safed and Jerusalem – two sister cities in their holy expression and existence." **[tinyurl.com/chamah 11]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

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Fitness maven writes her first book

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Jennifer Cohen, a personal fitness trainer, dedicates her first book, No Gym Required (Key Porter), to the average woman who looks in a mirror and recoils in horror at what she sees.

"It's disturbing to me that women are so unhappy with their bodies," she said in an interview. "They should try to maximize their assets. My aim is to inspire women to be the best they can be."

And in a direct nod to her book, she said that women can be fit, healthy and self-assured without going to a gym or hiring a trainer.

Cohen, who commutes between Toronto and Los Angeles, urges women to adopt a back-to-the-basics approach that bucks quick-fix Hollywood solutions.

As she writes:

"I am writing this book for you, the woman who has marvelled at the miraculous transformation of celebrities who go from flab to fab, the ones who lose 30 pounds in 10 days and claim to have done it through a balanced diet and exercise, and is crushed that she is unable to achieve similar results."

Cohen 33, believes that women should set realistic goals through a vigorous and consistent training regimen and good eating habits.

"The key to consistency is adjusting your mindset and making small, simple changes," she explained.

"Diet is the foundation of any healthy fitness program," added Cohen, who has worked with movie stars, studio executives and recording artists. "It's 70 per cent of the battle."

When it comes to meal planning, she urges readers to concentrate on natural and organic foods.

As she put it, "Processed foods and those with preservatives are laden with hidden sugars and fats. Even meats and so-called natural produce like fruits and vegetables are filled with antibiotics and pesticides, which are proven toxins. Your body's food-processing mechanism is just not designed to handle them."

And she distinguishes between "good" fats (avocados, most nuts and olive, peanut and canola oils) and "bad" fats (meat, poultry, seafood, eggs and some dairy products).

"Control what you're eating," said Cohen, recommending home-cooked meals as important in reducing the intake of calories.

Apart from diet, Cohen recommends good sleeping habits, daily morning push-ups and a catalogue of exercises.

She recommends a list of pop hits designed to pump you up, from Get into the Groove by Madonna to Rhythm Nation by Janet Jackson.

Motivation is also pivotal.

"People find excuses not to work out and eat right. They have no time. They feel overwhelmed. They don't know where to start. But it's easy to eliminate the excuse factor."

Cohen, who is five feet six inches tall and weighs 129 pounds, exercises about 30 minutes a day and hikes once a week when she is not spending time with her clients.

She is the fitness director of the Yorkville clubs in Toronto. In Los Angeles, she leads exercise classes on Santa Monica's beach and is working on a line of "wellness" sneakers she has developed.

Jennifer Cohen working out

Keenly ambitious, she hopes to build her small company into a fitness empire. "One hundred per cent. I've always been entrepreneurial," she said.

Born in Winnipeg, Cohen has a BA degree in psychology from the University of Manitoba and an MA in sports marketing from George Brown College in Toronto.

Always a devotee of exercise, she worked at a succession of jobs before settling on a career in fitness.

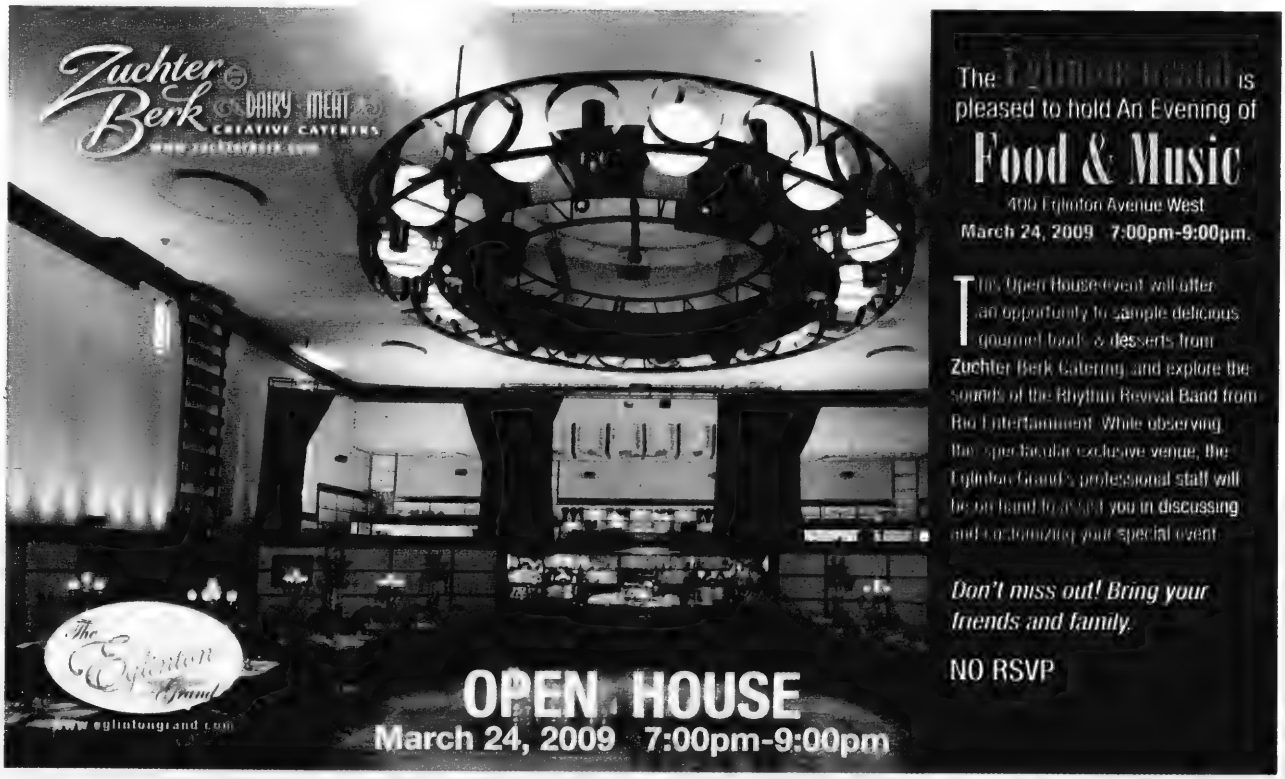
Cohen's late father, Michael, was an electrical contractor. Her Israeli-born mother, Essia, is a psychiatric nurse.

Fresh out of school, Cohen joined the marketing department of the Toronto Raptors basketball team, after which she was an account manager for a record company in the city.

She settled in Los Angeles 10 years ago, and in her first job there as a talent agent's assistant, she lasted a mere 11 days. "I hated it."

Tired of the entertainment industry, she went back to what she knows best — fitness — becoming a personal trainer.

Now, with No Gym Required, Cohen hopes to impart her wealth of knowledge and experience to all those women out there who aspire to improve themselves through diet and physical fitness.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On Campus

Carleton project to film Shoah survivors, students

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

With the number of living Holocaust survivors dwindling each year, Carleton University's Jewish studies centre is working on a project to capture survivors' stories on film so that they can educate students for decades to come.

The Max and Tessie Zelikovitz Centre for Jewish Studies at Carleton, with financial help from the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, is trying to build on the work that survivors themselves have been doing to educate younger generations about the Holocaust.

Andrea Segal, the Holocaust film project's co-ordinator, said that what makes this program unique from other educational Holocaust video programs is that while the films will provide survivors' testimonies, they will also focus on the interaction between survivors and students.

"The impetus is having the Holocaust survivors speak, but it is equally focused on the students and their reactions," Segal said.

She said the vision of the Zelikovitz Centre is to film survivors who have been invited to tell their stories at schools, as well as the students and teachers who listen, question, and respond emotionally to what they've learned.

Beyond that, Segal said the goal is to use the footage – filmed by Gemini-nominated director Francine Zuckerman – as part of academic modules. She hopes to produce at least a dozen volumes that focus on different topics, such as children in hiding or the Auschwitz death camp.

She added that the initiative could take about five years to complete, but the first priority is to raise the funds needed to get all the filming done.

Once the filming is complete, the next step is to work on developing the academic programming that will complement the footage.

"One-third of the Carleton faculty in Jewish studies is focused on Holocaust studies. Carleton is providing that expertise," Segal said, adding that written educational material will go hand in hand with the films to give students an in-depth look at the Holocaust.

"The filming aspect can go ahead without the academic part, because the survivors are getting older and we don't know how much longer they're going to be able to do this."

The centre has already produced a 20-minute promotional video that features two Holocaust survivors – David Shentow and Anna Czajeznecky – speaking to high school students, as well as interviews with students who were moved by the testimonies they heard.

Segal said she hopes to reach out to Holocaust survivors across the country who share their survival stories with younger generations.

"As you can imagine, it is very difficult for the survivors to go and speak and share their stories, because it literally brings them back to that time, but they feel personally that it is very important so that it doesn't happen again, not only to Jewish people but to others as well," Segal said.

To view the promotional video, visit http://granny.carleton.ca/media/edc/LivingHistory.html.

MULTIFAITH FAIR: On March 5, Brock University students from Jewish, Christian and Muslim groups joined together to promote peace, unity and strength on their St. Catharines, Ont., campus. Representatives from the Muslim Students' Association, Campus for Christ, Brock Christian Fellowship and the the Jewish Students' Association delivered speeches and sang songs with messages of peace. From left are JSA members Gidon Frank, Olga Davydova, Sarah Josse and Rob Schwartz.

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Only paid Family Moments announcements can be guaranteed to appear in a specific issue, when received by deadline, 10 days prior to publication date. All other items will appear on a first-come, first-served basis, as space allows.

Mazel tov announcements featured on onlysimchas.com will appear as space permits.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Label the back of all photos and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. Please keep all announcements to 25 words, maximum.

To send in digital photos, please visit

www.cjnews.com

and click the Family Moments banner at the top.

Mazel tov Maité Cougnoux (Pascale) & Maurice Cougnoux (Claire) of France, Arlene & Gabby Green of Montréal on the engagement of Geraldine Cougnoux & Adam Green.

Mazel tov to Ian Pollick & Jennifer Rutenberg on their engagement. Proud parents Susan & Joel Rutenberg, Debby & Gerald Edberg, Brian & Heather Pollick.

Mazel tov to Zev Bergman & Michelle Koltunov on their recent engagement. Ana & Gary Koltunov, Bev & Allen Bergman and their families are thrilled.

Mazel tov on the recent birth of Marlie Sydney Schatzky.

Mazel tov to Noah Koven on his recent bar mitzvah. Love from friends and family above and below the Peace Bridge.

Raina (née Bercovici) & Adam Hodgin announce the birth of their daughter named after great-grandparents Fannie & Jacob Taraday. Grandparents are Pam & Lew Levy.

Mazel tov to Mitchell Golosky, on the occasion of his bar mitzvah. With much love, Mindy & Irwin, Jessica and Daniel.

Mazel tov to David & Michael Wagman on the occasion of David's eighth birthday.

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What's New Deadlines. NOTE HOLIDAY DEADLINES. Wednesday, March 25, is the deadline for the April 8 issue, Tuesday, March 31, is the deadline for the April 17 issue and Monday, April 6, is the deadline for the April 23 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Thursday, March 19

VOLUNTEER IN ARGENTINA

Ve'ahavta: The Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee hosts an information session about volunteer/travel in Buenos Aires, Argentina, for six weeks this summer. 6:30-7:30 p.m. 2221 Yonge St. #12. RSVP, katie@veahavta.org or 416-964-7698.

EVENING WITH MADAME F

The Holocaust Centre of Toronto, UJA Federation, presents a musical drama about a survivor who, as a youth, performed in the women's orchestra in Auschwitz. 7:30 p.m. at Leah Posluns Theatre. Tickets, 416-635-2883, ext. 5153, or hschwartz@ujafed.org.

Friday, March 20

BEACHES ONEG SHABBAT

The Beaches Synagogue hosts a potluck dinner at 6:15 p.m., followed by a musical Oneg Shabbat led by **Susan Lichen** and **Karen Gold**. 7:15 p.m. Bring a veggie or dairy dish. 416-694-7942

CELEBRATE SHABBAT

Beth Emeth Synagogue hosts Shabbat Across North America. Celebrate Shabbat with service at 7 p.m. and dinner at 8 p.m. $20, children 13 and under $12. Non-members $25, children $17. Reserve, 416-633-3838.

Saturday, March 21

PARSHAH DISCUSSION

Morley Goldberg on the weekly portion, Vayakhel, 9:30 a.m. at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. 416-221-3433

NEW THORNHILL MINYAN

The Partnership Minyan meets in Thornhill 9:30 a.m. at 7460 Bathurst St. in the party room. Child care available. Directions and info, http://sites.google.com/site/torontopartnershipminyan/.

SHABBAT IN 60 MINUTES

Learn how to follow Shabbat morning services, sing Shabbat songs and gain insight into the weekly Torah portion at Beth Sholom Synagogue. 10:30 a.m. Family Shabbat lunch to follow, $10, children free. RSVP, 416-783-6103 or andrea@bethsholom.net.

NOT ANY SATURDAY NITE

The Reena Foundation's New Leadership Division hosts "Not Just Another Saturday Night," a night of dancing and shopping for artwork created and donated by local artists. 9 p.m. Academy of Spherical Arts. Tickets, www.reenafoundation.org or 905-764-1081 or dbleeman@reenafoundation.org.

Sunday, March 22

JUDAICA SALE

Beth Emeth Judaica Gift Shop hold a pre-Passover giant indoor sidewalk sale, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Merchandise reduced up to 50%. 416-633-3838

KABBALAH

The Kabbalah Centre hosts "Kabbalah: The Best-Kept Secret" 225 Front St. W. 2 p.m. To register, www.kabbalah.com.

1,000 FACES OF ISRAEL

Artzy, a passion for arts, culture and Israel, hosts the multimedia art exhibit 1,000 Faces of Israel. 7 p.m. Bata Shoe Museum. $10, student $7. Tickets, 416-913-2424.

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

Join Kehillat Shaarei Torah for a book talk on **Geraldine Brooks**' novel People of the Book with facilitator **Marilyn Herbert**. 7:30 p.m. 416-229 2600, ext. 5

Continued on page 33

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www.cbbmtl.org

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Starter Camp: Sunday, July 26 - Sunday, August 9
Group 2: Sunday, July 26 - Thursday, August 20

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What's New

Continued from page 32

Tuesday, March 24

THE AS IT HAPPENS FILES

Mary Lou Finlay reads from her book The As It Happens Files. Barbara Frum Library. 7 p.m. 416-395-5440

INFORMATION SESSION

Toronto School Board Trustee **James Pasternak** hosts a business development and employee services information session. 7-9 p.m. at Clanton Park Synagogue. RSVP, 416-395-8406 or james.pasternak@tdsb.on.ca.

FILM REVIEW

The Adath Israel Book and Film Review series reviews the film After the Wedding. 8 p.m. $10, non-members $15. 416-635-5340

SEDER PREP

The House offers adults a class on Passover seder preparation with **Rabbi Rafi Lipner**. 8 p.m. RSVP, rafi@thehousetoronto.com.

STROH ZIONISM SERIES

Rabbi Michael Stroh concludes a series on Zionism and the Idea of Israel. 7:30 p.m. Non members $5. 905-889-2252, ext. 5

Wednesday, March 25

NORENE GILLETZ

Holy Blossom Sisterhood presents "A Panic-Free Passover" – a demonstration with **Norene Gilletz**. 6:30 p.m. $30 in advance, $36 at the door. 416-789-3291, ext. 221

USING COLOUR

Pride of Israel hosts "Using Colour in Your Home," the March Rosh Chodesh program, 7:30-9 p.m. Admission is a food or cash donation to the Kosher Food Bank. 416-226-0111, ext. 10

JEWS IN GERMANY TODAY

Beth Tzedec Library presents "From Jews in Germany to German Jews: Jews in Germany Today," with **Mark Webber**, of York University. 7:30 p.m. 416-781-3514, ext. 225

PROSTATE CANCER GROUP

Man to Man and Side to Side, prostate cancer support groups present **Dr. Juanita Crooks** on The Radiation Story, external beam radiation and brachytherapy. 7:30 p.m. at the Toronto Botanical Garden. Family and friends welcome. 416-932-8820

BOOK CLUB

Join Beth Sholom Synagogue for a conversation with **Joseph Kertes** on his book Gratitude moderated by **Steven Skurka**. 8 p.m. $15, non-members $20. 416-783-6103 or andrea@bethsholom.net

GENEALOGICAL MEETING

Henry Blumberg speaks on "Genealogy Websites, Past and Present and the Impact of Social Interaction Networks" at the Jewish Genealogical Society meeting. 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. Non-members $5. www.jgstoronto.ca

Other News

GET READY FOR PESACH

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler on "The Haggadah," Monday, March 23, 9:30 a.m. and Tuesday, March 24, 8 p.m. Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. 416-789-3213

LIMBER AND PAIN FREE

Temple Har Zion hosts chiropractor **Corey Adler** on "Ways to Keep Limber and Pain Free." Thursday, March 26, 1 p.m. Non-members $5.

SEDER PREPARATION

Rabbi Yoni Berlin, principal of Ulpanat Orot, leads a seder preparation workshop on the commandment to 'tell the story' of leaving Egypt. Thursday, March 26, 8 p.m. at Or Chaim Yeshiva. Free. www.mekorot.ca or 416-877-2050

LITERARY LEVEE

Miriam and ATID Chapters of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO hosts A Literary Levee, 2009. Thursday, March 26, 6:45-9 p.m. at the North Toronto Memorial Community Centre with author **Gregory Levey**, a book exchange and silent auction. Reserve in advance, $36, 416-630-8373 or levee2009@hotmail.com

BARRIE MUSICAL EVENT

Madd Canada and the Am Shalom Congregation, Barrie, host a fundraising evening with singer **Susan Cogan**. Thursday, March 26, 7 p.m. $15. RSVP, 705-792-3949

THE HAGGADAH

Darchei Noam Congregation offers "How Did That Get Into the Haggadah?" with **Eric Mendelsohn**. Thursday, March 26, 7:30 p.m. 416-638-4783 or www.darcheinoam.ca

FRUM ON OBAMA & ISRAEL

David Frum on "A Frightening Question: The Obama Administration and the Security of Israel" at Canadian Friends of Laniado Hospital's Annual **Dr. Joseph Weil** Memorial Lecture. Thursday, March 26, 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. $18. Reserve, 416-785-8946.

KOBY MANDELL EVENT

Canadian Friends of The **Koby Mandell** Foundation presents The San Diego Repertory Theatre Production of The Blessing of a Broken Heart. Thursday, March 26, 7:30 p.m. 142 Edilcan Dr. $36. RSVP by March 20, 905-882-1997 or joanne@kobymandell.org

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE

Bring the whole family to Beth Sholom Synagogue's Friday Night Live Kabalat Shabbat with **Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich**, **Cantor Eric Moses**. Friday, March 27, 6 p.m. Oneg Shabbat dinner to follow with children's entertainment. $26, child (3-12) $10, non-members $39, child $15. RSVP, 416-783-6103 or andrea@bethsholom.net.

HOT HAVANA

The Winchevsky Centre and the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association host storyteller **Brian Gordon Sinclair** performing his one-person play Hemingway's Hot Havana on Saturday, March 28, 8 p.m. Proceeds to be donated to Cuba Hurricane Relief Fund. Suggested donation $15. www.winchevsky.org or 416-789-5502

CAVALCADE OF STARS

The Shaarei Shomayim Congregation presents an evening of Jewish song starring The Gypsy Flame. Proceeds from the evening will support Jews for Judaism's work. Sunday, March 29, 6:45 p.m. $18 or $29/couple. 416-789-3213.

VIOLENCE TO VIOLINS

Support From Violence to Violins, a project that provides school kids in at-risk Toronto areas with the chance to learn life skills with free violins and music classes, at a concert by violist **Moshe Hammer** with piano accompaniment at the Petroff Gallery, Thursday, April 2, 8 p.m. Suggested donation $60. RSVP, 416-782-1696 or info@petroffgallery.com

HAVE SEDER GUESTS

Jewish Immigrant Aid Services needs seder hosts for a newcomer family to Canada. To volunteer, 416-630-6481, ext. 30.

COMMUNAL SEDERS

Beth Tzedec Congregation hosts a seder Thursday, April 9, 8:45 p.m. with **Rabbis Sean** and **Jennifer Gorman**. $95, children (3-13) $65. reserve by April 1, 416-781-3511.

Temple Har Zion hosts a seder led by **Rabbi Cory Weiss**. Thursday, April 9, 6:30 p.m. $60, children (4-12) $30, 905-889-2252

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child. 4600 Bathurst St. Call **Shawna** 416-638-7800, ext. 215, for info and registration. www.jfandcs.com. All events at Lipa Green Building.

Younger Widow/Widower Bereavement Group: Six sessions beginning Tuesday, March 24, 7:30-9 p.m.

Birthdays, Hockey Games and Holidays: Making It Work After Divorce. A workshop. Monday, March 30, 7-9 p.m.

Adult Children Losing a Parent: Six sessions beginning Tuesday, March 31, 7:30-9 p.m.

FOR SENIORS

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets every Tuesday at 10 a.m. at Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 416-630-9444

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Mah-jong players wanted. Movie, Thursday, March 19, 1:30 p.m.; Dance, Sunday, March 29, 7-10 p.m. Info, Tuesday-Thursday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881

Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC. "The Life and Work of **Mordecai Richler**, Satirist, Social Critic" with **Adam Fuerstenberg**. Thursday, March 26, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155

Beth Emeth Club Sameach, Ballroom Boot Camp. March 31, 7:30 p.m. $6, non-members $10. RSVP, 416-633-3838

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Russian Samovar Day, Wednesday, March 25, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free.

Concert, Thursday, March 26, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Rabbi Danny Gottlieb and **Rabbi Wayne Allen** on "Everything You Wanted to Know About Conversion (But Were Afraid to Ask)." Monday, March 23, 7:30 p.m. Ext. 23.

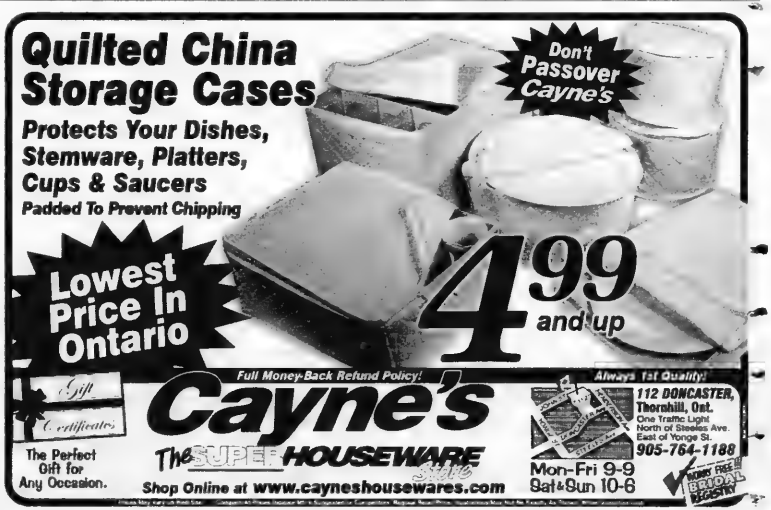
Passover Break Camp, April 16-17. centrecamp@bjcc.ca or ext. 378.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Music Talk with **Jordan Klapman** on "**Burt Bacharach** and **Hal David**: The Cool Sound of the '60s." Sunday, March 22, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. $9, includes a light breakfast. jewishlife@mnjcc.org or ext. 154.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 36



OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Albert Drexler	Feb 28/09	182 Blythwood Rd
Saul Strul	Mar 1/09	7420 Bathurst St
Sidney Fromer	Mar 1/09	211 Queens Quay W
Lillian Sheppard	Mar 1/09	429 Walmer Rd
Thelma Bauman	Mar 2/09	4005 Bayview Ave
Ruth Fryman	Mar 1/09	490 Highway # 8
Abe Barath	Mar 3/09	3 Sonata Cres
Leon Goldstein	Mar 1/09	57 Waterloo Ave
Rickey Fitzerman	Mar 3/09	49 Camberwell Rd
Edythe Wasserman	Mar 2/09	299 Ridley Blvd
Joel Schwartz	Mar 3/09	82 Ridge Hill Dr
Marcia Papoff	Mar 4/09	150 Neptune Dr
Marvin Kuretzky	Mar 4/09	28 Kingsbridge Cir
Donna Lederman	Mar 4/09	60 Deseka Dr
Stephen Silverberg	Mar 2/09	26 Stormy Point Rd
Dr. Martin G. Wolfish	Mar 6/09	3900 Yonge St
Jean Hanser	Mar 5/09	55 Delisle Ave
Lois Newman	Mar 6/09	110 Promenade Circle
Reta Cott	Mar 7/09	2 Neptune Dr
Irving Hoffman	Mar 7/09	111 Avenue Rd
Sherry (Sharon) Levy	Mar 8/09	14 York Ridge Rd

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Goldberg, David	Feb. 25/09	Private
Broner, Zvi Josef	Feb. 26/09	
Greenstein, Albert	Feb. 25/09	37 Green Bush Rd
Goldman, Leon	Feb. 27/09	59 Zahavy Rd
English, Evelyn Shirley	Feb. 26/09	866 Sheppard Ave. W
Zajdner, Nathan	Feb. 28/09	1555 Finch Ave. E.
Dertkin, Gennady	Feb. 28/09	Private
Mendlowitz, Moishe	Mar. 2/09	Private
Shykoff, Henry	Feb. 26/09	Private
Wagner, Ruth	Mar. 3/09	333 Clark Ave. W.
Green, Bella Sylvia	Mar. 4/09	645 Castlefield Ave
Borsa, Leslie	Mar. 4/09	2121 Bathurst St
Jakubowicz, Miriam	Mar. 5/09	68 Codsell Ave
Salmon, Allan	Mar. 7/09	77 Evanston Dr
Cohen, Ruth Colette	Mar. 6/09	Private
Goldstein, Anna	Mar. 6/09	741 Finch Ave. W
Cohan, Shirley Sadie	Mar. 7/09	7440 Bathurst St
Adler, Jacob	Mar. 8/09	24 Dunsmore Grdns
Gouslitser, Mark	Mar. 8/09	5 Fisherville Rd
Klein Frisch, Susana	Mar. 8/09	Private

HEBREW BASIC

Bella Spiro	Mar 2/09	625 Finch Ave W

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We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our dear family and friends for your loving support as we mourn the loss of our beloved son and brother,

Aaron Laufer ז"ל

Your kind expressions of sympathy have helped sustain us during this difficult time.

Tommy, April, Nechama, Eitan, Avi

To place an unveiling notice, please call at least 15 DAYS prior to the date of the unveiling. To place any other family related notice, please call at least 10 DAYS prior to the issue date.
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Coast to Coast

Israel Bonds office reopens in Winnipeg

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — After leaving his position with Israel Bonds here just before Rosh Hashanah last year, Ariel Karabelnicoff returned to his post at the beginning of February.

During the time Karabelnicoff was away, the Israel bonds office in Winnipeg was closed and all dealings went through the main office in Toronto.

"Purchases of bonds still took place, and no long-term damage was done with the closure of the office, but it's best for everyone if the office here is open for business," Karabelnicoff said in an interview.

Ariel Karabelnicoff

He said he left to work at Oreck Canada, a retail-distribution company, where he managed its call centre, but came back because he missed his old job.

"What can I say? I like working for the State of Israel and I am very happy to be back," he said. "I feel that the work I am doing is meaningful, and my heart is in this job. I will try to make a difference."

Since he has been back, Karabelnicoff, who was born in Argentina and lived in Modi'in in Israel before coming to Winnipeg, said that sales have been "very solid."

"It's important that we have a functioning office in Winnipeg, especially at this very critical time, economically and politically for Israel," he added.

"Look, in New York, people who have been laid off from Wall Street are applying to get a job selling Israel Bonds. If I were in New York, do you know how many people would want my job?" he said.

Even after multiple wars and everything else it has been through, Israel has never once defaulted on paying back its bonds, the personable Karabelnicoff said.

He noted that more than one million Israelis are now within range of Grad missiles that have been launched from Gaza.

"Because of this, the government of Israel will spend hundreds of millions of dollars building missile-resistant structures like kindergartens, schools, synagogues, hospitals, bus stations and other vital infrastructure in the south of Israel to protect the population and try to allow people to live as normally as possible."

Money from Israel Bonds purchases will be used to invest in infrastructure in southern Israel, Karabelnicoff said.

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Meals on Wheels program faces deficit

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — The Winnipeg Jewish community's kosher Meals on Wheels program is facing a deficit as it struggles to keep up with a 50 per cent increase in demand over the past year.

"The program is in financial trouble," said Marilyn Regiec, executive director of the Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre, which prepares the meals and arranges delivery five days a week.

"We are projecting a $25,000 deficit for the program come our April year end."

Regiec said the problem stems from rising food costs and increased demand. The number of meals going out now works out to 12,000 a year, compared to 8,000 just a few months ago.

"Each meal – consisting of soup, bread, an entrée and dessert – costs us $10.50 to prepare," Regiec said. Until recently, the centre had been charging recipients $6.20 for each meal.

"We just raised the price by $1," she said, noting that in Montreal the rate is $7.50, while the Vancouver and Ottawa Jewish communities charge in the $9 to $10 range.

Avery Spigelman loads kosher meals at the Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre for delivery.
[Myron Love photo]

She noted that the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg contributes $2 toward the cost of each meal, but only up to a limit of 8,000 meals a year.

"This is supposed to be a community program, not just a Gwen Secter program," Regiec added. "We are operating the program because the community requested us to run it."

She said that she and two of her Gwen Secter board members met on Jan. 21 with federation president Jonathan Kroft and David Kroft, chair of the federation's allocations committee.

"They came here and we showed them our facility and what we do," Regiec said.

"We gave them facts and figures. It was enlightening to them. They weren't aware of what we do here, what the kosher Meals on Wheels program was about and how we do it."

Commenting on the situation, Jonathan Kroft said: "We are very proud of the Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre and the work they do. The kosher Meals on Wheels program meets an important need in our community. We understand the need for increased support. We are working hard with the Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre to find a way to sustain this service for all the people who benefit from it.

"In these times, delivery of services can be particularly challenging. We are confident that we will find a way to deal with this issue."

Faye Rosenberg Cohen, the federation's director of planning, added that "everyone agrees that the kosher Meals on Wheels program is a key component in reducing the isolation for Jewish seniors. We all want to see it thrive."

Rosenberg Cohen said the jump in demand seems to have coincided with the closing of the Omnitsky Fine Foods, Winnipeg's last kosher butcher shop, about a year ago.

"I think the increase in demand has come because a lot of people who want to keep kosher either can't cook on their own or can't afford to buy kosher meat," Regiec said. "They appreciate that we offer fresh, homemade meals. Also, more people are choosing to stay in their homes rather than move to nursing homes."

The program could also use more volunteer drivers to deliver meals, said Shirley Murray, manager of volunteer services for Meals on Wheels Winnipeg Inc. Currently, there are nine drivers serving north end clients and another nine delivering in the south end. Murray said the program could use another 10 volunteer drivers.

"The kosher Meals on Wheels program is a very important component of Jewish life in Winnipeg," Regiec said. "Its loss would be devastating to the elderly and incapacitated members of our community. For some of our clients, this is one of their few life lines to our Jewish way of life."

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Thursday, May 7 | 1:30 pm
"The Golden Age of Yiddish Radio in Canada: Max Mandel's The Jewish Hour"
Prof. Michael Mandel

Thursday, June 4 | 1:30 pm
"A.M. Klein and Irving Layton: Two Masters of Canadian Poetry"
Prof. Adam Fuerstenberg
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The Toronto Jewish Folk Choir 83rd Spring Concert - "Tribute to Srul Irving Glick & Yiddish Favourites"
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Tuesday, June 9 | 12:15 pm
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UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO
Across the street. Across the globe

Montreal federation travels to Paris for new CEO

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — After being without a top professional for almost a year, and following an international search for a replacement, Federation CJA in Montreal has chosen Paris-based Argentine native Andres Spokoiny as its new executive director.

Spokoiny, who has been working with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) for 12 years mainly in the Baltic states and Poland, will assume the Montreal post in June.

Andres Spokoiny

He replaces Danyael Cantor, who resigned in April 2008 as the federation's executive vice-president after 11 years to become executive director of the Bronfman Jewish Education Centre, a federation agency. Senior federation staff and lay administrators have been filling in since he left.

Federation president Marc Gold believes Spokoiny fits the federation's needs "to a T," despite his lack of direct experience in Canadian Jewish affairs.

In addition to his global knowledge of Jewish communal life today and experience in rebuilding Jewish communities from the ashes of Communism, the federation was attracted to Spokoiny for a number of other reasons. He is fluent in English and French, as well as Hebrew, Yiddish, Spanish and Portuguese; he's youngish at "about 40", and he has a background in both Jewish learning (he attended a rabbinical seminary) and in business (he holds an MBA) and worked for IBM for nine years.

His Argentine nationality and time living abroad are also assets, Gold said, as the federation continues to try to integrate newcomers from the former Soviet bloc, Latin America and France into the community.

Spokoiny and his wife, Erica, have two small children. This is another positive attribute, Gold said, because the federation is trying to reach out more to young families.

"In our search, we set our sights high," said Gold. "We were looking for someone who was strategic and decisive, a leader and a driver of change as we confront the challenges of today and beyond…

"Although he has been based in Paris, he is very familiar with the challenges facing North American federations with whom he has worked closely on various projects with the JDC."

Gold described the search for a new top professional as an "exhaustive process" in which hundreds of potential candidates were considered. The headhunter Egon Zehnder International in Montreal and the Mandel Centre for Leadership Excellence at United Jewish Communities in New York were consulted.

The 95-year-old JDC is the largest Jewish American non-governmental organization, supporting Jewish communities in need around the world. Since the fall of Communism, it has played a major role in the revival of Jewish communities that were cut off from the Jewish world for decades.

Spokoiny was also concurrently the director of Leatid Europe, an institute training Jewish lay and professional leaders throughout Europe.

After taking up his duties in Montreal, he is expected to continue his association with the JDC International Centre for Community Development at Oxford University.

Prior to joining the JDC, Spokoiny worked at IBM, where he was responsible for training and development, including recruitment in the southern region of Latin America.

"I'm honoured and humbled by this responsibility," Spokoiny said in a statement. "Montreal is a great and unique community that, in many aspects, can and will be a 'model community' in North America and beyond. I'm looking forward to this personal and professional challenge."

Spokoiny, who is of Ashkenazi background, holds a BA from the Conservative Rabbinical Seminary in Buenos Aires and earned his MBA from the University of Buenos Aires. He also studied at the Melton Centre of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

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Obama might do more for Darfur, Cotler says

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — While Canada has a significant role to play in any international effort to enforce the International Criminal Court's (ICC) arrest warrant against Sudanese president Omar Hassan al-Bashir, it's U.S. President Barack Obama who might actually "take the lead," Mount Royal Liberal MP Irwin Cotler believes.

The warrant, issued this month, charges al-Bashir with war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Speaking to reporters earlier this month, Cotler, who also serves as his party's special counsel on human rights and international justice, elaborated on the potential U.S. role in enforcing the warrant after he had issued an earlier statement hailing its historic nature.

"Will Canada take the lead in this? I don't believe we can," Cotler said. "But I think President Obama might."

Cotler, who also chairs the Save Darfur Parliamentary Commission and is a former justice minister, cited as an encouraging sign the appointment of Susan Rice, assistant secretary of state for African affairs under former U.S. president Bill Clinton, as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

"She has said she is still haunted by [the 1994 genocide in] Rwanda and won't let it happen again, even if military intervention is required," Cotler cited her as saying.

Cotler also pointed to other signs he saw as encouraging, including that Obama had expressed the "most commitment" to Darfur while serving in the U.S. Senate and running for president.

Cotler remembered meeting with senior Obama adviser Samantha Power of Harvard University's Carr Centre for Human Rights, who expressed a commitment to Darfur that was "unequivocal and unwavering."

Obama was the only presidential candidate to mention Darfur during the campaign and said the United States will "have to act," Cotler said, noting that Obama also received a report on genocide prevention from former U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright.

In terms of concrete action, the United States, under the aegis of the United Nations, could quarantine Sudanese ports to block the exportation of oil to China, Sudan's largest importer. "China is an enabler here," Cotler said.

Cotler also denounced the recent Israeli Apartheid Week on North American university campuses and singled out for praise Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff's statement that was also highly critical of the week-long series of events.

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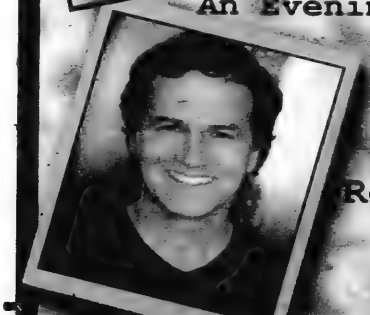
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Les Grands Ballets to make Israeli debut in June

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal will be performing in Israel this June for the first time in the troupe's 52-year history.

Tel Aviv and Jerusalem are the first stops in a three-week international tour that also includes Cairo, Egypt, Ljubljana, Slovenia, and Baden-Baden, Germany.

Les Grands Ballets will take part in Tel Aviv's celebration of its 100th anniversary with performances June 1 and 2 at the outdoor stage of the Suzanne Dellal Centre for Dance and Theatre, the base of the Batsheva Dance Company, and then at the Jerusalem Centre for the Performing Arts on June 5 during the Israel Festival, an annual cultural showcase. President Shimon Peres has been invited to attend.

The trip to Israel marks the 60th anniversary of bilateral relations between Canada and Israel. Canada officially recognized the Jewish state a year after it declared independence.

The troupe will present two major contemporary pieces from its repertoire: Noces by the Belgian choreographer Stijn Celis and Cantata by the Italian dance maker Mauro Bigonzetti.

In Noces, 24 dancers are on stage in this fast-paced romp reminiscent of a Balkan peasant wedding and featuring the music of Igor Stravinsky. The piece has been frequently presented on the ballet's other tours.

Cantata, a more recent addition to the troupe's stock, is set to popular Neapolitan songs from the 18th and 19th centuries performed live and expresses energetically the many ways men and women relate to each other, from seduction to love to jealousy.

Les Grands Ballets will give four shows at the Cairo Opera House June 9 to 12. The troupe has never performed anywhere in the Middle East before.

"Unquestionably, this tour will be a milestone in our history," said Alain Dancyger, the ballet's executive director. "The company's historic presence in the Middle East is significant, clearly underscoring our established international reputation."

Dancyger, however, took the occasion of announcing the tour to also voice his displeasure with the federal government's cutbacks in arts funding and the threat that the cuts poses to the ballet's ability to go abroad.

He said the Middle East and European tour is going ahead, even though the loss of government funding and the drop in private-sector support due to the recession will leave the troupe with a $250,000 shortfall, as things stand now.

"I am extremely upset that the government of Canada has abolished PromArt and Trade Routes, the only two programs that support international tours.

"The decision to cut off all financial support for exporting and raising the visibility of our culture is surprising in the current economic context. Foreign demand for our company's work is at the highest level it has ever been in our history."

Shown is a scene from the exuberant contemporary ballet Noces, which Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal will present in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in June. **[Serguei Endinian photo]**

Dancyger also expressed these views earlier this month to the parliamentary committee on Canadian heritage and is waiting for a final answer from Ottawa on whether it will contribute to Les Grands Ballets' upcoming international tour.

The ballet is also facing opposition to its Israel tour from Tadamon, a pro-Palestinian group that promotes the boycotting of Israel, including in the cultural realm. An open letter by Freda Guttman being circulated on the Internet appeals to the troupe to cancel the performances as a stand against Israel's alleged violations of international law.

Although the troupe has never been to Israel, it does have solid ties with the country through Israeli choreographer Ohad Naharin going back to 2002. That year, Les Grands Ballets commissioned Naharin, Batsheva's artistic director, to create the dance work Minus One, which has since become a staple of its repertoire.

Last spring, the ballet celebrated Israel's 60th anniversary at Place des Arts with a retrospective of avant-garde Naharin's creations, which it then toured at the National Arts Centre and Quebec City's Grand Théâtre, and a tribute to one of its longtime subscribers, builder and philanthropist David Azrieli.

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Passover Food Ideas

Chag kasher v'samayach

Editorial

As we begin to detect small hints of spring in the air, Jewish cooks everywhere turn their thoughts to Passover cooking. Planning a menu for this holiday seems to be a source of great discussion, and it sometimes challenges even the most seasoned chefs.

Preparing food for friends and family members who have restrictions or allergies, or even those who are just plain fussy, can be difficult. After we've rid our homes of chametz, including many of the items that are a staple in some of our diets, we are occasionally at a loss about what to prepare.

We should, however, concentrate on what we *can* eat for Passover, not on what we have removed from our pantry. In addition to the array of fresh vegetables and fruits that can be incorporated into many dishes, there are, every year, more and more kosher for Passover items available in our supermarkets.

We can also draw upon what our mothers and grandmothers served on holidays past. Passover is a time to rely on traditions, and most families have a favourite chicken dish, kugel recipe or Passover dessert that will be sure to please even the most picky eaters.

Keeping in mind cultural variations in cooking, and the ever-present trend toward low sugar, high fibre, vegetarian foods, we've tried in our upcoming Passover food pages, to include meal ideas for beginner cooks about to host their first seder, and for those of us just looking for a new dish for the seder or a mid-week meal.

The ingredients in all our recipes are acceptable for Passover use, and can be purchased kosher for Passover in most large Jewish communities.

From all of us at *The CJN*, enjoy these recipes. Chag kasher v'samayach.

– CB

Persian Haroset as seen in The Hadassah Jewish Holiday Cookbook, Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, Inc publishing.

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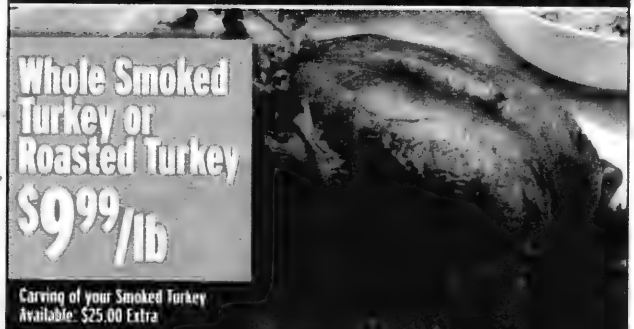

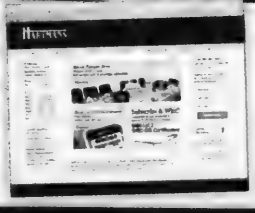

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Three chocolates and a macaroon

By DAPHNA RABINOVITCH
Special to The CJN

Two seders, at least two main courses, salads, a myriad of side dishes. Not to mention the chicken soup and matzah balls. Passover can be daunting in the amount of work and preparation involved. Making dessert should, in my mind at least, be stress free, however, so I've whipped up four unbelievably easy and delicious recipes to replace the usual chiffon cake, make it a little bit more fun and a whole lot of tasty. Three chocolate desserts and a macaroon, to be precise. Most can and should be made ahead, leaving your oven and stove top free for all the last minute reheating that seders call for. If you have kids hankering for something sweet during the holidays, why not treat them to what I call Passover S'Mores? Simple and effective, it may just become a holiday ritual.

PASSOVER S'MORES

Break off small pieces of matzah, about 1-1/2 inches in diameter. Top with 1 heaping tablespoon of semisweet or milk chocolate chips. Place in microwave. Heat for about 40 seconds on high power or until chocolate has melted. Remove from microwave. Place heaping tablespoon of marshmallow fluff; microwave for about 20 to 30 seconds or until marshmallow fluff has puffed and melted. Let cool slightly before enjoying.

OOEY GOOEY I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'RE KOSHER FOR PASSOVER BROWNIES CAKES

These divine little cakes can be made all year round. Feel free to substitute pecans for the marshmallows or caramel sauce for the chocolate ganache. I like to serve each one on an individual plate with a decorative pattern of raspberry coulis around the plate and a few fresh raspberries.

3/4 cup unsalted butter or margarine
3 oz. unsweetened chocolate, coarsely chopped
1 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
3 eggs, lightly beaten
2 tsp. kosher for Passover vanilla
1/2 cup matzah cake meal
2 tbsp. potato starch
1/4 tsp. salt
1-1/3 cups kosher for Passover mini-marshmallows
1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Topping:
8 oz. semisweet chocolate, chopped
3/4 cup whipping cream or nondairy creamer

Lightly grease 16 muffin cup tins. Preheat oven to 350. In saucepan set over medium heat, melt together butter and chocolate, until smooth. Whisk in granulated and brown sugars. Whisk in eggs. Whisk in vanilla. Gently stir in matzah cake meal, potato starch and salt. Stir in marshmallows and chocolate chips.

Fill each cupcake tin about halfway with batter. Bake in centre of preheated oven for 15 to 17 minutes or just until set. Do not overbake. Remove from oven and let sit for 5 minutes. Run small paring knife around edge of each cake and remove gently. Let cool on rack. (Brownie cakes can be covered tightly with plastic wrap and stored for up to 3 days).

Topping: Bring cream or creamer to a boil over medium high heat. Add chocolate; whisk until smooth. Let cool slightly. With fork, drizzle chocolate ganache over top of brownie cakes. Makes 16 brownies cakes.

CHOCOLATE MARTINIS

This showstopper treat is simplicity itself, although it does have to be made the day ahead and you should plan on having enough room in your fridge to store the martini glasses. To make this dish more sophisticated, or if the children at your seder are having another dessert, feel free to add kosher for Passover liqueurs to each layer, matching the liqueur to the chocolate flavour.

Continued on page 40

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Sweeten up your holiday meal

Continued from page 39

10 oz. bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped and melted
10 oz. premium milk chocolate, coarsely chopped and melted
8 oz. premium white chocolate coarsely chopped and melted
6 cups whipping cream
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

In saucepan, bring cream just to a boil. Stir 2 cups of cream into each of the melted chocolates, stirring until blended and smooth. Let cool to room temperature. Cover each bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for about 1-1/2 hours, or until well chilled and liquid but not yet firm. Using a standup or hand held mixer, beat the dark chocolate mixture until soft peaks form. Divide evenly among 8 martini glasses, smoothing top.

Whip the milk chocolate mixture until soft peaks form. Carefully spoon milk chocolate over dark chocolate layer, smoothing top and being carful not to mix the layers. Chill while preparing the white chocolate layer.

Whip the white chocolate layer until soft peaks form. Carefully spoon on top of milk chocolate layer, again being careful not to mix the layers. Cover top of glasses with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 12 hours or for up to 36 hours.

Garnish with shaved chocolate, a chocolate kiss, or fresh raspberries. Makes 10 servings.

CHOCOLATE CARAMEL HAZELNUT SOUFFLE CAKE

1 lb. bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
1 cup unsalted butter or margarine
8 eggs, separated
1 cup granulated sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
1/4 tsp. salt

Topping:
1 cup granulated sugar
1 cup toasted chopped hazelnuts
3/4 cup whipping cream or oil based cream substitute
pinch salt

Preheat oven to 350. Lightly grease a 10-in. springform pan.

In saucepan set over medium low heat, melt together butter and chocolate until smooth.

In bowl of standup mixer, beat egg yolks until broken up. With mixer running, gradually add 1/2 cup of the sugar. Beat for about 5 minutes or until mixture is very thick and almost to the ribbon stage. Fold egg mixture into chocolate mixture.

In clean bowl, whisk egg whites and salt until soft peaks appear. With mixer running, gradually add remaining 1/2 cup sugar until stiff glossy peaks form. Stir one-third of the egg whites into chocolate mixture to lighten it. Fold in remaining egg whites just until blended, along with vanilla and salt.

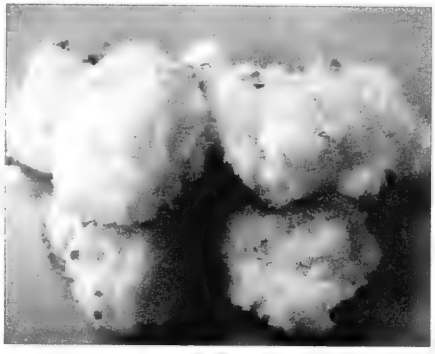
Transfer batter to prepared pan. Bake in centre of preheated oven for 30 to 35 minutes or until puffy and just firm. The cake should still be moist in the centre although not runny. Cool completely in pan on rack. Wrap cake in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 24 hours or for up to 2 days. Bring to room temperature before serving.

Topping:

In heavy saucepan, combine sugar and 3 tbsp. water, swirling pan until sugar is dissolved. Cook over medium heat, brushing down sides of pan with a wet pastry brush, until sugar starts to turn a deep amber colour. This should take about 5 minutes. Immediately remove the pan from the heat; stir in nuts and cream. The mixture will froth and splatter. Return pan to low heat and cook, stirring, for about 3 minutes or until mixture thickens. Slice cake and top with hazelnut caramel sauce. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

TRIPLE NUT MACAROONS

4-1/4 cups shredded sweetened coconut (2-200g bags)
1/4 cup each chopped almonds and pecans
1/4 cup chopped walnuts
1 tbsp. matzah cake meal
1 can sweetened condensed milk
1/4 cup cream of coconut (optional)
1 tsp. vanilla
2 egg whites



Preheat oven to 350. In large bowl, combine coconut, almonds, walnuts, and pecans. Stir in matzah cake meal, breaking up any lumps of coconut if necessary. Stir in sweetened condensed milk and coconut cream (if using), stirring until mixture is well moistened.

In separate bowl, beat egg whites until stiff. Gently fold into coconut mixture.

Using 2-tbsp. ice cream scoop or large spoon, drop mounds of cookie onto two parchment paper-lined baking sheets.

Bake in centre of preheated oven, one baking sheet at a time, for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. Let cool completely on rack. Serve same day or wrap tightly in plastic wrap for up to two days. Makes about 44 macaroons.

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Pan Roast Potatoes
Green Beans Almondine
Cole Slaw
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Mandlebroit
Passover Cookies
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Charoses

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MENU #5

Gefilte Fish & Horseradish
Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls
Roast Chicken
Roast Brisket of Beef
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Lockshen Pudding
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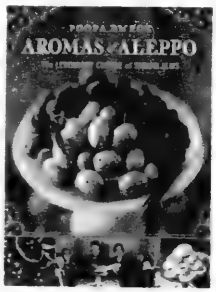
Passover Food Ideas

Some traditional Syrian recipes

By JUDY BART KANCIGOR
Special to The CJN

When Sarine and Murad Kattan left Aleppo, Syria, in 1947 for their honeymoon in Italy, their thoughts were of love and their future in their beloved homeland, where their family and the larger Jewish community had lived and flourished for centuries.

Back in Aleppo, the announcement of the United Nations partition of Palestine fuelled the already smoldering atmosphere of anti-Semitism, setting off pogroms that virtually extinguished all Jewish life, erasing centuries of rich, thriving culture.



Those Jews that survived fled by the thousands, and the honeymooners were forced to remain in Italy, never to see Aleppo again.

By all accounts, the culture and cuisine of the Jews of Aleppo should have perished. They did not. The Syrian Jewish community, extremely tight-knit despite being scattered across many continents, continues to thrive.

Now Sarine and Murad's daughter, Poopa Dweck, has documented the rich culinary legacy of her parents' homeland in Aromas of Aleppo: The Legendary Cuisine of Syrian Jews (Ecco/HarperCollins). Illustrated with magnificent photos, Aromas of Aleppo documents the sumptuous cuisine and unique customs of this vibrant culture.

"When the Jews left Aleppo, they dispersed throughout the world to Mexico, South America, Israel, Panama, Geneva," noted Dweck by phone from her home in Deal, N.J. "The largest Syrian Jewish community is in Brooklyn. We stay connected – the community is like one. At weddings and bar mitzvahs, we all know each other."

From the time they arrived in America, the Aleppian community has defied assimilation. "When we came to Brooklyn, to the Lower East Side of New York, other Jews didn't even think we were Jewish. We were dark-skinned. We looked different. We didn't eat matzah ball soup and challah. We made our own Syrian flatbread.

"The reason we're so closely knit, I think, is that we have paid strict adherence to our customs and religious observances. We didn't go to meatloaf. Through its food, holidays and life-cycle events we've kept it intact."

Passover is the culinary highlight of the year for Aleppian Jews, as for Jews the world over. Through our celebratory meal, the seder (the word means "order" in Hebrew), we retell the 3,500-year-old story of our ancestors' flight to freedom from the land of Egypt. And everything on the table is laden with meaning.

The centrepiece is the seder plate that holds the traditional symbols. "The plate I use was my mother's," Dweck said. "We're three girls and two boys in the family, and the others knew when she passed away that I was getting that plate."

The shank bone hearkens back to the days of old when the Passover celebration included offering and eating a sacrificial lamb, and unlike Jews of eastern European ancestry (the majority in the United States), Aleppian Jews present the bone with the meat attached on the seder plate.

Charoset is a fruit and nut mixture symbolizing the mortar used by our ancestors as slaves in Egypt. Every Jewish community in the world makes it with whatever is local.

"Because dates were so plentiful in that part of the Arab world," Dweck noted, "our charoset would be made purely with all dates, whereas Ashkenazim use apples."

Aleppian Jewish cuisine is a combination of Mediterranean and Levantine cooking. "Compared to other Arab cuisines, it is elaborate, very opulent, because Aleppo itself was a flourishing commercial centre, and the ingredients came from all over the world and were of the best quality," Dweck said. "Through Turkish, Persian and Spanish influences that came to Aleppo, it was brought up to a high level. Our cuisine was known as the pearl of the Arab world."

Continued on page 42

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Butternut Squash Nutmeg
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CHOOSE 1

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~ or ~

Moroccan Style Quinoa Salad with Dried
Cranberries, Diced Sweet Potatoes & Nuts

~ or ~

Mesclun Greens, Cherry Tomatoes,
Hearts Of Palm & Cucumber

CHOOSE 1

Lean Brisket
with Braised Carrots, Sweet Potatoes, Onions,
Apricots, Dates & Prunes

~ or ~

Slow Roasted Boneless Turkey Breast
with Sautéed Mushrooms, Spinach
& Onion Matzo Stuffing

~ or ~

Chicken Breast Supreme
with an Apricot Glaze

~ or ~

Baked Salmon
with an Olive & Sundried Tomato Tapenade Crust

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Drizzled with Olive Oil & Aged Balsamic

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Sweet Potato Mash

Asparagus with Roasted Cherry Tomatoes

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Candied coconut with pistachios is favoured dessert

Continued from page 41

One factor that distinguishes Aleppian cooking is the use of tamarind. "Whereas the rest of the Arab world uses pomegranate concentrate, we use tamarind," she said.

Her book tour took her to Beijing, where fresh tamarind grows in pods in the countryside. "I taught the Jewish community there how to make tamarind concentrate. It's so plentiful there."

Through Persian influence, Aleppian cooking makes much use of dried fruit, especially apricots, in everything from meat dishes to desserts.

"My mother and the old-timers would get nuts when they'd see these fake cakes for Passover. Our traditional dessert of choice for Passover is Coconut Helou Hindi (candied coconut with pistachios)," she said. "I make it every year. One reason it's so popular is, a hundred years ago, we couldn't use chocolate, because it contained lecithin, which is not kosher for Passover. This is our key dessert for the holiday."

Rice is an important part of the Passover Aleppian table, and a traditional Passover meal will typically include several *mehshis* (stuffed vegetable dishes) with a meat and rice filling called *hashu*. "Aleppo is known as the queen of *mehshis*," Dweck said.

Judy Bart Kancigor is the author of COOKING JEWISH: 532 Great Recipes from the Rabinowitz Family. www.cookingjewish.com

STUFFED EGGPLANT WITH QUINCE

2 dozen very small eggplants, cored
2 recipes hashu (recipe follows)
3 quinces, cored, peeled, and cut into 6 pieces each

Sauce

3 tbsp. tamarind concentrate, homemade or store-bought (see notes)
juice of 1 lemon (about 3 tbsp.)
2 tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. kosher salt
6 pieces candied quince (recipe follows), for garnish

Stuff eggplants with hashu. Place alternating layers of quince and stuffed eggplants in a large ovenproof saucepan.

To make sauce: In a small bowl, combine tamarind concentrate, lemon juice, sugar, salt and 1 cup water and mix well. Pour sauce over stuffed eggplants and quince. Place a heatproof plate over them to serve as a weight.

Cook over medium-low heat for about 10 minutes, or until eggplants release moisture. Remove saucepan from heat. Add enough water to cover eggplants 3/4 of the way. Keep heatproof plate on top as a weight. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce heat to low, cover and simmer 30 minutes, or until 1/4 of the liquid remains.

Preheat oven to 300. Transfer saucepan to oven and braise 45 minutes. Uncover and braise 30 minutes more. Garnish with candied quince, if desired. Yield: 6 to 8 servings

Notes: While Sephardi Jews eat rice for Passover, eastern European Jews do not and may enjoy this dish after the holiday.

Tamarind concentrate is sold in Middle Eastern stores. If you cannot find kosher for Passover tamarind concentrate, you can make your own (recipe below).

Shape any leftover hashu mixture into 2-inch balls and cook it with the sauce.

Hashu:

1 lb. ground beef
1/3 cup short-grain white rice
1 tsp. allspice
2 tbsp. vegetable oil
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. kosher salt
1/4 tsp. white pepper
1 onion, chopped (1/2 cup, optional)
1 cup pine nuts (optional)

Soak rice in water, enough to cover, for 30 minutes. Drain. Combine meat, rice, allspice, oil, cinnamon, salt, white pepper and, if desired, onion and pine nuts in a large mixing bowl. Mix well.

Tamarind Concentrate:

3 lb. tamarind pulp
3-3/4 cup sugar
1-1/2 tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice (optional)
3 tbsp. sour salt (citric acid)

In a large mixing bowl, submerge tamarind pulp in about six cups of water. Cover and soak 6 to 8 hours or overnight. After pulp has soaked, while keeping it in the water, pull it apart to make a mash-like, pulpy, soft mixture.

Line the bottom of a colander with cheesecloth. Fit the colander over a large nonreactive mixing bowl. Strain tamarind pulp by pressing it firmly against the surface of the colander, squeezing to extract as much liquid as possible. Pick out any plant matter and pits from the liquid and set it aside.

Place the strained pulp in a clean mixing bowl and submerge in fresh water. Work to pull it apart again, then strain and reserve the liquid. Repeat this process a third time.

Combine all the reserved tamarind liquid and strain through a cheesecloth or fine mesh strainer. Discard the pulp.

Pour the tamarind liquid into a large saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the liquid is reduced by half. Add the sugar, lemon juice if desired, and sour salt to the tamarind liquid. Increase the heat to medium and boil slowly, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon, until the mixture has a silky consistency akin to a dark, thick syrup. Let the mixture cool thoroughly, then pour into a glass jar. Store in a cool, dry place up to a year. Yield: 4 cups.

Candied Quince:

3 to 4 quinces, cored, peeled and cut in 1-in.-thick slices (about 3 cups)
3 cups sugar

In a medium saucepan, cover quinces with sugar and cook over medium-low heat. The sugar will melt and liquefy, and the quinces will start to turn a beautiful dark and rosy colour.

When mixture bubbles, reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 1 hour, or until quinces are thoroughly coated with a thick, gooey syrup. Transfer quince and syrup to a jar, and store in refrigerator for up to 2 months. Yield: 2-1/2 cups.

Source: Aromas of Aleppo.

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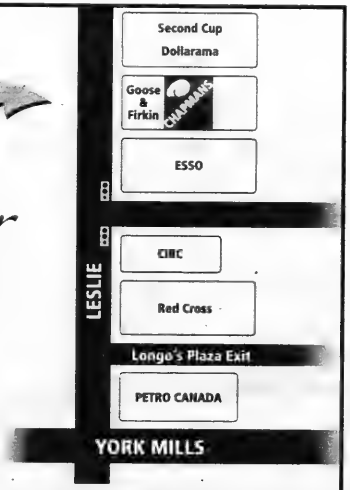

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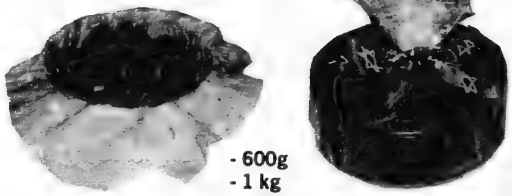

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Raisin

Almond

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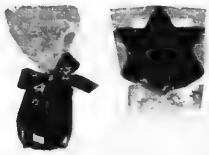
Hazelnut

Other



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Anything's possible for Passover – even gluten-free!

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

Pesach strikes an acute sense of panic in many Jewish homemakers worldwide. Faced with dietary guidelines, special family traditions and endless Passover meals to prepare, we often find cooking for Pesach a daunting task.

Tamar Ansh, well-known Israeli author of two bestselling cookbooks, believes that on Pesach, "anything's possible!" In her latest cookbook, A Taste of Tradition: Pesach and Beyond (Targum), Ansh offers an amazing array of culinary possibilities, each more delicious than the next. Her recipes, ranging from basic to gourmet, are so simple to prepare and delicious that you won't want to wait until next Pesach to use them again. This unique cookbook also contains tantalizing, full-colour photos that will whet your appetite.

A Taste of Tradition: Pesach and Beyond, which contains more than 350 recipes, has a universal appeal and is sure to become a family favourite. Ansh has thought of something for everyone, from meat lovers to carb addicts, from health nuts to junk food fanatics. As an extra bonus, all her recipes are 100 per cent wheat-free, gluten-free and non-gebrochts, making them ideal for kosher celiacs and individuals who are gluten-sensitive.

On Passover, many Jews will not eat gebrochts – foods containing matzah and its derivatives (cake meal, matzah meal, farfel) that are combined with liquid and could possibly ferment. Some Jews will eat these foods only on the eighth day of Passover. Other Jews will eat matzah products that are combined with fruit juice but not with water. (Consult your rabbi for guidelines.)

With luscious, no-fail recipes and dozens of tips and helpful hints, A Taste of Tradition: Pesach and Beyond, is a wonderful resource for Pesach and all year round. Enjoy!

NON-GEBROCHTS KNEIDLACH

1 lb. ground white chicken or white turkey
2 eggs
1/2 tsp. salt
1 potato, cooked and mashed
1 small onion, diced or puréed

Combine all the ingredients and mix them well. Refrigerate the batter for about an hour to make the batter firm. Make small balls out of it and drop them into boiling water. Cook the kneidlach for about 3/4 of an hour. Add them to the soup pot about 45 minutes before your soup finishes cooking.

Note: Kneidlach can be made in advance and frozen. Remove them from the freezer and place them in the soup approximately 45 minutes before the soup finishes cooking. Yields 15 to 20 balls.

THICK YELLOW VEGETABLE SOUP

2 tsp. olive oil
1 to 2 medium onions, sliced
1 green pepper, chopped
1 red pepper, chopped
2 orange or yellow peppers, chopped
2 medium sweet potatoes, cubed
2 medium potatoes, cubed
1 butternut squash, cut in chunks
5 to 7 large carrots, sliced
large piece of pumpkin, cut in chunks
3 ripe tomatoes, chopped
2 to 3 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
small bunch each fresh dill and parsley

In an 8-quart (or larger) pot, heat the oil over a medium flame and sauté the onions and peppers until they are transparent. Add all the other vegetables, salt, pepper and herbs. Fill with water until almost the top of the pot. Bring to a boil and then simmer for about 2 hours on a low flame, until the vegetables are completely soft. Purée until smooth. Freezes well. Serves 8 to 10.

Continnued on page 47

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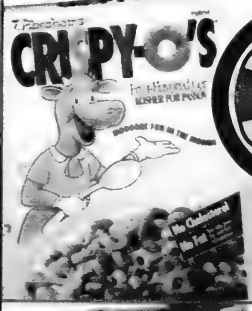

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Continnued from page 45

MANGO, AVOCADO AND ROMAINE LETTUCE SALAD

1 bag bug-free romaine lettuce, rinsed and dried
1 large, fresh mango, peeled and sliced
1 large avocado, peeled and cubed
1/3 cup craisins or dark raisins
1/2 cup candied pecans, crushed
1 small red pepper, chopped

Tear apart the lettuce and place it in a large salad bowl. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix it all together.

Dressing
1/4 cup honey
2 tsp. oil
1/4 cup light mayonnaise
2 tsp. apple cider vinegar or regular vinegar
2 tsp. granulated garlic powder
2 tsp. granulated onion powder

Whisk all of this together and pour it over the salad right before serving. Yum! Serves 4 to 5.

BEET SALAD IN ORANGE SAUCE

4 to 5 beets, cooked and sliced
1 small onion, diced
1 tsp. vinegar
3 tsp. sugar
1 tsp. olive oil
1/2 cup fresh orange juice
small pinch of salt

Toss all of the ingredients together in a bowl to mix well. Place the mixture in a pot, cover with the lid, and bring to a boil over a high flame. Reduce the flame to low and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and refrigerate. Stir before serving. Serves 4 to 6.

SWEET POTATO SCOOPS

8 medium sweet potatoes
2 tsp. oil
1/2 cup plus 2 tsp. brown sugar
1 packet vanilla sugar (see note below)
12 to 15 pineapple rings
1 tsp. cinnamon

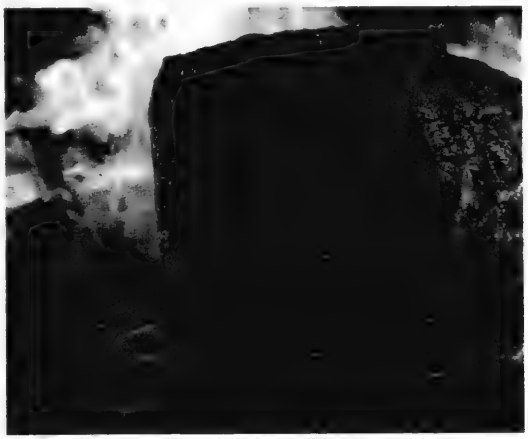
Preheat oven to 350. Boil or bake the sweet potatoes until they are soft. Mash them with the oil, 1/2 cup sugar and vanilla sugar. Lay out the pineapple rings on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Scoop the sweet potato mixture with an ice cream scooper and place each scoop on top of a pineapple ring. Mix the 2 tsp. brown sugar with the cinnamon and sprinkle it on top of each scoop. Bake, uncovered, for 45 minutes, until the sweet potato mixture is slightly crispy on top. Serves 12 to 15.

Note: To make your own vanilla sugar, bury a split vanilla bean pod in granulated sugar. (Use 1 bean per pound of sugar.) Store in a container for a week and then remove vanilla bean. You can reuse the vanilla bean for up to 6 months. (Or substitute 2-1/2 tsp. sugar and 1 tsp. vanilla extract for 1 packet vanilla sugar.)

TANGY VEAL OR MEAT ROAST

6 garlic cloves, peeled
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup (wine) vinegar
2 tsp. parsley flakes
1/2 tsp. oregano
4 to 5 lb. (2 to 2 1/2 kg) roast, washed and dried
1 cup semi-dry white wine
3 stalks celery, diced
3 carrots, sliced into rounds
2 large onions, sliced

Next-Day Marinade
1/2 cup olive oil
1/2 cup (wine) vinegar
1 tsp. parsley flakes
1/2 tsp. oregano
1 cup tomato sauce, optional
6 to 8 garlic cloves, pressed



Squeeze the garlic cloves into a bowl using a garlic press. Add the olive oil, vinegar, parsley and oregano to the bowl, mixing it well with the garlic. Place the meat into a large glass or plastic container and pour this garlic mixture over it. Marinate the roast for 6 hours or overnight, basting periodically.

Then place the meat in a pot that fits its size as closely as possible. Add the wine to the meat, put the pot over a medium low flame and simmer it for 3 hours. Cool and refrigerate the pot overnight.

The next day, remove the meat from the pot and discard the juices. Slice the roast and lay it flat in a 9 x 13-inch (or a bit larger) baking pan. Mix all the ingredients for the marinade together and pour it over the meat slices. Arrange the celery, carrots, and onions over the meat and cover the roast well with foil. Bake at 350 for another 2 hours, basting the roast once an hour or so to prevent it from drying out. Serves 8 to 10.

APPLESAUCE CRANBERRY ICE

1 1/2 to 2 cups applesauce
2 cans jellied cranberry sauce
1 cup lemon-lime soda
1 cup orange juice
1 to 2 tsp. fruit-flavoured liqueur, optional (I did not use it)

Mix everything by hand in a bowl, or beat it with a hand beater for a minute or two to make it smooth. Pour it into a large, flat, square plastic container and freeze it overnight. (Right, this took you about 4 1/2 minutes so far? Now comes the next 5 minutes or so!)

The next day, remove the ice from the freezer. Cut into it, if you can, to break it into four or five pieces and put it into the mixer bowl. If it is too frozen to break apart, let it sit on the counter for a few minutes. Beat it slowly with the regular flat beater (i.e., NOT the egg whipping beater!), until it resembles sherbet consistency. Refreeze it. Remove the ice from the freezer about 5 minutes before serving. Scoop it into dessert bowls and serve. Serves 6.

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Recipes from my friend's bubbie, Loblaws, Weight Watchers

By MARNI BRINDER BYK
Special to The CJN

In the age of no fat, carbs and calories, I figured my friends would have some interesting recipes for Passover that I could share. However, when I polled some of them via Facebook and e-mail, most replied that they stick to their mother's traditional recipes or they consult a cookbook. Many were apprehensive to share their recipes, and after my repeated requests, some finally broke down to admit none were completely of their own invention. After receiving my friend Pam Isen's Chicken Soup recipe, I received the following confession: "I have to admit I am feeling guilty, as this is my Bubbie Peggy's recipe."

PAM'S BUBBIE PEGGY'S CHICKEN SOUP

1 whole kosher chicken
1 kosher chicken back
1 beef bone
2 large carrots
2 large yellow onions
4 medium parsnips
1/2 bunch celery
5 sprigs fresh dill
salt to taste

Peel, rinse and then cut the carrots and parsnips into large chunks. Keeping the vegetables large, about 3 inches long, makes it easier to save them when the soup is done. Peel and cut the onions into quarters. Wash and cut the celery into large pieces as well. Save the dill for the final stages of cooking.

Fill a very large stock pot halfway with hot water and bring to a simmer. Rinse the chicken and bones under cold water and then place into the hot water. As the water comes to a boil (do not let it come to a rolling boil), the scum will begin to float to the top. Skim the scum and discard. Allow to simmer a few more minutes until the water is clear and skim again if necessary.

Next, place all of the vegetables, except the dill, into the pot. Using a small pot, fill the stock pot with warm water, almost to the top. Cover the pot, tilting the cover slightly to vent the steam. Bring to a boil (watch carefully so it does not boil over), then reduce to a light simmer and leave covered with a slight vent for about 2 hours.

Periodically, skim the fat from the top of the soup and discard. During the last hour of cooking, season with kosher salt to taste. Don't be afraid of the salt. It is a key ingredient to bring all of the flavours together. Just remember one thing – season a little at a time, you can always add more. The purpose of the salt is not to make the soup salty; it is to enhance the flavour. Next add the whole sprigs of dill and then allow the soup to simmer lightly uncovered for 1 hour. Removing the cover will allow the soup to reduce slightly and concentrate the flavour.

The easiest way to strain the soup is to have a large colander resting on top of a second large stock pot. Pour the soup through the colander slowly (or use a large measuring cup as a scoop if you have trouble pouring from the large pot) in stages. Remove the vegetables and pieces of meat during the straining and set aside to serve in the soup. After straining, place the soup in smaller containers and allow them to cool almost to room temperature before placing in the fridge. Add kosher for Passover noodles or matzah balls. This soup freezes very well.

After Pam's confession, I reapproached friends to ask them for their family recipes, or anything that they cook that may be inspired by other recipes. My friend Susan Javier then offered up her kosher for Passover version of a recipe from a cooking class at Loblaws, which used crackers instead of matzah, but Susan recommends the matzah version.

SUSAN'S MATZAH BARK

1-1/2 cups butter
1-1/2 cups brown sugar
4 pieces of matzah
bag of chocolate chips
1 cup sliced almonds or sprinkles or similar garnish

In a saucepan, melt butter and brown sugar, bringing to a boil, stirring constantly. Prior to this, place matzah on a cookie sheet. Spread the melted butter and sugar evenly over the matzah and place in a 350 degree oven for a few minutes until the butter starts to bubble. Remove from oven and put chocolate chips on top. Pop it back in the oven for about 30 seconds to start melting the chocolate chips, then spread the chocolate, sprinkle sliced almonds or colourful sprinkles on top, cool and serve.

Gilah Benmergui, a friend for over 20 years, offered up her Passover-friendly version of a Weight Watchers' recipe that is a family favourite. Gilah has modified it over the years to make it even lower in fat and calories, however, she claims this version is the perfect healthy alternative for the holidays.

GILAH'S LOW-FAT PASSOVER CHEESECAKE RECIPE

12 Passover cookies of choice (2-1/2 in. squares) made into crumbs or 1 cup matzah meal
2 packets vanilla sugar (if using matzah meal)
2 cups light cream cheese
1 cup fat-free sour cream
1/2 cup sugar
1 tbsp. vanilla extract
2 large eggs
2 tsp. lemon zest

Preheat oven to 325, wrap outside of 10-in. springform pan with heavy-duty foil, then spray inside entirely with non-stick spray. Press cookie crumbs or matzah meal (combined with two packets of vanilla sugar) over bottom and partially up the sides of pan.

In large bowl, with an electric mixer on medium speed, beat cream cheese, sour cream and vanilla extract until smooth. Add eggs one at a time, beating on low speed until blended, then stir in lemon zest.

Pour batter into springform pan and set into large roasting pan. Pour boiling water into roasting pan so that it comes halfway up sides of springform pan. Bake until almost completely set, 35-40 minutes.

Turn off oven and prop door open with wooden spoon, leaving cake in oven 30 minutes. Transfer to rack and run knife around edge of pan to release cake. Cool completely, then refrigerate covered until ready to serve.

Last, but never least, my best friend, high school prom date, and the only man to respond to my request sent me the following message, "OK, this cake is *soooo* good, I literally make it year-round. I always have the ingredients in my cupboard, and it's always a show stopper. Really good with ice cream, and/or berry compote, and/or whipped cream." He has been making this cake for so many years that he cannot remember where it originated.

GAVIN NEVSKY'S CHOCOLATE FUDGE CAKE

cooking spray
unsweetened cocoa
8 oz. bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
1/2 cup margarine
3/4 cup sugar
3 large eggs, beaten
1 tsp. vanilla extract
2 tbsp. powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350. Lightly coat a 9-in. pie plate (I use a clear, round 9-in. Pyrex) with cooking spray, and dust with cocoa.

Melt chopped chocolate and margarine in a heavy saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly, 3 to 5 minutes or until smooth: whisk in 3/4 cup sugar, whisking until blended.

Whisk together eggs and vanilla in a large bowl. Gradually whisk in chocolate mixture, whisking until blended. Pour into prepared pie plate.

Bake at 350 for 30 minutes or until edges are dry and centre is set. (Do not over-bake). Cool in pie plate on a wire rack 30 minutes or until completely cool. (Cake will fall slightly when removed from oven.) Dust with 2 tbsp. powdered sugar just before serving.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

David Goodman is the founder of Hoops For Israel.

HOOPS 4 ISRAEL

Hooping it up for a cause

By-ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Ethiopian Israeli communities will once again benefit from a bunch of guys and gals doing their best Toronto Raptors impressions to raise money.

The third annual Hoops For Israel (H4I) 3-on-3 charity basketball tournament, sponsored by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Birthright Israel Alumni Committee, takes place on Sunday, March 22, at the HoopDome, 75 Carl Hall Rd. at Downsview Park. The event gets underway at 1 p.m.

David Goodman, 26, the driving force and founder of the tourney – he put the first H4I together after returning from a Taglit-Birthright Israel trip in 2006, during which he became deeply affected by the plight of Ethiopian olim in Kiryat Moshe – is enthused by the yearly growth in participation and funds raised for the cause.

The last two Hoops events benefited the Kiryat Moshe Ethiopian community. This year, H4I fixed its sights on the community of Bat Yam, located about a 10-minute drive outside Tel Aviv.

H4I volunteers visited the town this past December and met with its community leaders and youth. The charity will help build a new athletic complex and mentor its youth by imparting "intangible leadership skills," Goodman said.

According to the H4I website, the community at Bat Yam – approximately 6,000 people – is one of the most impoverished in Israel, with 70 per cent of residents living below Israel's poverty line.

Goodman's last two tournaments helped raise nearly $300,000, and he predicts this year's tourney will raise almost $100,000.

Bat Yam youth ready to play.

Despite H4I's early and continued success, Goodman wants to see more done, particularly in terms of increased volunteerism by his peers in the North American Jewish communities.

"Why isn't volunteerism more widespread?" he asked rhetorically in a recent interview with Heebonics. "It rests on the laurels of volunteers to ensure the continuity of the Jewish community. And we're going to have to find [voluntary] events to cater to our generation."

To that end, Goodman, who is not afraid to dream big in this regard, said that this Sunday he'll officially announce the creation of an "overarching... social-networking" charitable body called Hoops For Change as a call to social action. H4I will be just one of many Hoops For Change's tikkun olam and tzedakah projects.

An outgrowth of intensive discussions with fellow youth philanthropists and Birthright alumni that took place earlier this month in Los Angeles, Hoops For Change will incorporate the H4I event among a slew of other charitable projects under its umbrella in Jewish markets across the continent.

"This will take tzedakah and tikkun olam to a new level," Goodman said. "We'll have various Hoops events in 2011. Not just in Toronto [but also] in Los Angeles, New York, Washington and Chicago." Plans to bring events to Montreal, Boston and Miami are also being considered in the longer term, he said.

Goodman said his pitch to expand on the H4I model was met with ardour by UJA Federation – the primary sponsor of H4I and the new Hoops For Change initiative – and by members of Birthright NEXT, peer counterparts in the United States.

Details are still being worked out, but as of this weekend, the new direction of Goodman's Hoops project will have an impact on those in need in Toronto and beyond.

"We'd asked participants [in H4I] to raise a minimum of $2,000 per team in order to play. But with the difficult economy, we've worked out a cool twist where players can volunteer hours in the community [as payment] instead," he said.

Among the numerous volunteer works planned is an advocacy initiative called The Garden Project, which involves volunteers making use of Israeli water and environmental technologies to plant gardens and beautify public basketball courts around Toronto.

Volunteer from H4I and Ethiopian olim.

Other projects include basketball workshops and support groups for Reena clients and a proposed alliance with Toronto's Concrete Hoops, an organization run by graduates of Oakwood Collegiate that preaches a "stay in school" mantra to the city's at-risk youth, all in a basketball-saturated camp environment.

One member of Concrete Hoops will also participate at this year's H4I and has promised Goodman he will run basketball clinics for Jewish Family and Child youth this summer at Centre Camp, operated by the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, in lieu of a monetary donation to H4I, Goodman said.

As of last week, Goodman estimated that H4I will reach its goal of 32 participating teams – nearly 144 people – and more than 50 volunteers at the event on Sunday to help the residents of Bat Yam.

"Who's to say we can't bring this model across Jewish communities in North America?" he asked. "I see a product we have now that deserves to be everywhere. There's no reason it can't have impact in... getting our peers involved in the Israeli and Canadian community."

He added: "Hoops 4 Israel opened a door for me... to think about what Israel needs."

As such, with the imminent announcement of the Hoops For Change model this weekend, Goodman is throwing down the gauntlet and challenging today's Jewish youth to do better for their fellow North Americans and Israelis in need.

"We're still working on Hoops For Change's budget. But we anticipate we'll have this whole infrastructure that will be an outlet for volunteerism for people who want to give back through basketball... in a really tangible and pragmatic way," he said, adding that there will be more news about the specifics of Hoops For Change in the months to come.

For more information, visit www.hoops4israel.com.

Global financial crisis hits Israeli diamond industry

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

TEL AVIV — The Israel Diamond Exchange (IDE) is an impressive place – a sprawling jewelry bourse that's secured like Fort Knox.

To enter one of the facility's four interlinked buildings, visitors must undergo a security check, leave a digital fingerprint impression and be willing to have their every movement scanned by thousands of strategically located cameras. Members' offices are enclosed behind heavy metal doors, and safes provide yet another level of protection.

It's all in the interests of safeguarding the shining baubles – worth millions upon millions – that the exchange's 3,000 members keep locked away in their offices.

But while the exchange goes to great lengths to assure the members don't lose their merchandise to skullduggery and thieves, the market outside has done what malevolent ne'er-do-wells couldn't do – slash drastically the value of members' inventory.

"The downturn in the economy in the world affected diamonds like it affected everybody," said IDE President Avi Paz. "First prices went down and then trade volumes went down."

Avi Paz

Paz, who also serves as president of the 29-member World Federation of Diamond Bourses, said despite industry efforts to boost prices by limiting the supply of rough diamonds, "some goods went down sharply, some less so, depending on quality and size. It's still difficult to give numbers since it's only five months."

While the full impact of the international financial crisis remains unknown, the Israel Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor released data for 2008 showing sharp declines in diamond sales. Net polished-diamond exports fell 11.8 per cent in 2008 to $6.24 billion (all figures US), compared with $7.07 billion in 2007, while net rough-diamond exports declined two per cent to $3.31 billion in 2008, from $3.38 billion the year before.

IDEX magazine, a diamond industry publication, quoted analyst Chaim Even-Zohar predicting consumer demand for diamonds would drop 10 per cent in 2009, while analyst Ken Gassman suggested the fall could be limited to only seven or eight per cent.

Danni Eizenstien has seen first-hand how the diamond industry – which Paz credited for 30 per cent of Israeli exports in 2008 – has suffered in recent months.

In January, things were particularly bad. "At first, for two weeks I didn't touch my [magnifying] loop. The phones were quiet," he said.

The second generation of a family business his father Avner started 30 years ago, Danni said that "the atmosphere here is that people are a little bit worried. In the beginning, it started a panic. It's gone toworried. People start to understand that they will lose and will have to recreate themselves again."

The current downturn comes after a very profitable period. "Two thousand and seven was a very good year," said Paz. "We had more than $10 billion in exports from Israel, nearly $7 billion in polished stones and $3 billion in rough stones.

Danni Eizenstein

"Even 2008 until the end of September, we were up nearly three per cent."

When the international economy began its collapse, Paz issued a news release calling on the two big players – De Beers and Alrosa – who supply nearly 75 per cent of the world's rough (unpolished) diamonds, to cut production. Alrosa, a Russian firm, cut entirely its supply of rough stones, while De Beers is down to 10 to15 per cent of its pre-downturn production.

The fates of Israeli diamond merchants are closely linked to their biggest customer, the United States, ground zero for the downturn. "Israel sells about 60 per cent of its polished diamonds to the United States," Paz said, adding he is encouraging merchants to diversify their markets.

"For the moment, it's difficult," he continued. "We took action to redress the impact of the downturn" by offering buyers free hotel stays, free entry to the Exchange and support for diamond merchants at international trade shows, including an important trade fair in Hong Kong.

So far, only a small number of merchants have been forced out of business. "Most are just looking at lower incomes," Paz said.

Paz believes that when it comes to discretionary purchases for Christmas gifts, diamonds hold a unique place. They maintain their value better than other luxury items, such as high-end handbags, electronics and holidays. "It will always be worth something," he stated.

Eizenstien puts diamond sales in two categories: "the bread and butter goods of mostly 1 point to 1.5 carats. They got hit, but not so much."

These stones were in high demand in recent years and prices soared. "In one day, it stopped." But, he added, "People will continue to get married and still need diamonds, but maybe smaller ones."

A second group of merchants bore the brunt of the downturn – those who dealt in larger stones. "A $1-million stone went down a lot," he said.

People were initially "shocked" by the extent of the slowdown and, for many, the extent of the troubles didn't register for two or three months. But they are recovering, if only at a fraction of earlier volume. "Small trades have started again. I believe things will pick up," he said.

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Schalit's release imminent?

JTA

JERUSALEM — Prime Minister Ehud Olmert postponed a special cabinet meeting that was thought to possibly include the approval of a deal to free kidnapped soldier Gilad Schalit.

The meeting was postponed from Monday to Tuesday. The cabinet was to either approve a release agreement or be updated on any progress in talks to free Schalit ahead of the establishment of a new government, according to the Prime Minister's Office.

Late Saturday, Security Agency Director Yuval Diskin and his special envoy, Ofer Dekel, arrived in Cairo in an attempt to reach an agreement. They had been scheduled to return to Israel Sunday night, but remained in the Egyptian capital to negotiations into Monday. The fact that they are remaining in Cairo is not an indication of what kind of progress is being made, according to the Prime Minister's Office.

Hamas, which is said to be holding Schalit in Gaza, is demanding the release of more than 400 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails, including some who killed Israelis. Israel wants some of the prisoners, most of whom are from the West Bank, to be exiled to the Gaza Strip or to third countries, according to reports.

Noam, left, and Yoel Schalit sit next to an empty chair that was reserved for Gilad Schalit at a Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony last Friday evening at the Schalit family's protest tent outside the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem. Some 40 close and distant relatives of the kidnapped soldier sat around the table for the Shabbat meal.

Schalit was captured in a May 2006 cross-border raid while on patrol duty.

Before the start of Sunday's regular cabinet meeting, expected to be the last of his government, Olmert said: "Over the past three years, we have made unceasing, I would say considerable, wide-ranging and complex efforts on various channels, some of them hidden, most of which were known to two or three people only, this in order to protect the effort being done in order to bring about an agreement that will lead to Gilad Schalit's release.

"All of these channels operated intensively in various places and contexts. The result as of today is that Hamas' position has been far beyond than what even the most moderate of those who have been constantly pushing and pressing to reach a far-reaching agreement with Hamas would have been prepared to accept."

Iran, Hamas express solidarity with Sudan president

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Iran and the Palestinian militant group Hamas showed their support for Sudan's president last Friday, sending top officials to the Sudanese capital and denouncing the international warrant for his arrest on charges of war crimes in Darfur.

Their visit came as the United Nations human rights group warned that Sudan's expulsion of 13 aid organizations from its Darfur region could also constitute a war crime. Sudan took the step in retaliation after the Netherlands-based International Criminal Court issued a warrant against President Omar al-Bashir on March 11.

The expulsion raised fears of a humanitarian crisis in the large, arid western region, where war has been raging for six years. Some 2.7 million people have been forced from their homes, and many rely on aid groups for food, water, shelter and medical care.

The government also ordered the closure of SUDO, the largest Sudanese non-governmental aid organization operating in Darfur, said SUDO's head, Ibrahim Mudawi. He said the order came late last Thursday, accusing the group of violations of the law, without providing specifics.

SUDO, with about 300 staffers, distributes food and drills water wells in Darfur, as well as operates 13 clinics and provides psychological help, Mudawi said. "We will take legal procedures against this decision," he said. "We are worried [about our staff]. We don't know what they are going to do with them."

The ICC accuses al-Bashir of leading a counter-insurgency campaign against Darfur rebels that included atrocities against civilians. Al-Bashir denies the charges against him and his government refuses to co-operate with the ICC, calling it part of a colonial conspiracy to destabilize Sudan.

Dozens of al-Bashir supporters marched in downtown Khartoum after Friday prayers in support of the president. They waved banners, shouting: "With our blood and soul, we defend you, al-Bashir." The small rally came after al-Bashir joined thousands of supporters demonstrating in the capital last Thursday denouncing the warrant.

Iran's parliamentary speaker, Ali Larijani, arrived in Khartoum along with Moussa Abu Marzouk, the No. 2 figure in Hamas' Damascus-based leadership. Larijani told reporters at the airport that the ICC's arrest warrant is an insult. Also in their delegation were Syria's parliamentary speaker, Mahmoud al-Abrash, and representatives from other Palestinian militant factions.

Iran and Hamas have been longtime allies of al-Bashir, whose government is dominated by Muslim fundamentalists and military officers.

A spokesperson for the UN human rights office said last Friday that the expulsion of the groups may be a war crime and said officials at the agency were looking into the issue.

"To knowingly and deliberately deprive such a huge group of civilians of means to survive is a deplorable act," Rupert Colville said in Geneva. "Humanitarian assistance has nothing to do with the ICC proceedings. To punish civilians because of a decision by the ICC is a grievous dereliction of the government's duty to protect its own people."

"This decision by the government could threaten the lives of thousands of civilians, living in camps in Darfur and elsewhere," he added.

Asked about the comments, a senior Sudanese foreign ministry official, Mutrif Siddique, said only, "Their campaign against us continues."

Siddique said the Sudanese humanitarian affairs ministry, which is responsible for the work of aid agencies, is aware that the expulsion of the organizations will have an impact on people in Sudan.

"This ministry and authorities have made arrangements to avoid a food shortage or a medical crisis," he said. "There will be a partial effect and they [authorities] will work to avoid any shortage."

Siddique claimed that major UN aid agencies were not affected by this expulsion decision and stressed that hundreds of Sudanese NGO workers remain and work in Darfur.

The U.S. State Department condemned the decision to expel the aid groups and urged the Sudanese government to allow the groups to continue operating.

"These organizations provide critical humanitarian assistance to millions of Sudanese, and the forced departure of these organizations immediately and seriously threatens the lives and well-being of displaced populations," said spokesperson Gordon Duguid.

The World Food Program questioned whether the remaining aid groups would be able to fill the gap.

"We simply don't have the capacity to carry out the lifesaving work of the NGOs," said the agency's spokesperson in Geneva, Emilia Casella.

Under the Geneva Conventions, it's illegal to intentionally starve people to death by blocking their access to food. The rule applies to international conflicts, but efforts have been made to incorporate it in customary international humanitarian law, which would carry weight in courts.

Other UN agencies also expressed concern about the consequences of losing their aid partners. The World Health Organization said it would tear a hole in its disease-monitoring efforts, which could lead to outbreaks of infectious diseases going unchecked.

"If they are not helping us do this very vital work, we may see the emergence of infectious diseases," said WHO spokesperson Fadela Chaib.

Arabs resent ICC indictment

By ZVI BAR'EL
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — International Criminal Court prosecutor general Luis Moreno Ocampo has issued an indictment against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

The indictment, issued on March 4, made him an instant hero for civil rights activists and the enemy of Arab opponents of "new imperialism."

"Western imperialism left the Islamic countries in the last century after it destroyed them and exploited their wealth through direct conquest, and came back to them via the window of conquest and destruction for its own ends, by means of the legal frameworks it set for itself, such as the International Criminal Court, with the excuse of defending human rights and disseminating justice via western, rather than international, criteria," wrote Saudi publicist Hamad al-Majid in the newspaper Asharq Alawsat.

Is this a western effort to unseat al-Bashir and divide Sudan into three districts, so that the West can rule the country, or is this an indictment of a person accused of genocide, mass murder and sponsoring – perhaps even planning – mass rapes in Darfur?

In Khartoum, the answer is clear. The carnival atmosphere al-Bashir organized for himself after the indictment was publicized was proof of it: there were donkeys bearing the prosecutor's picture and dog puppets with Ocampo's name, and al-Bashir danced to songs that cursed the prosecutor and condemned his supporters.

Al-Bashir seized power in Sudan in 1989 and runs a dictatorial regime of terror there. He does not plan to report to the International Criminal Court. The Sudanese parliament, which he controls, is planning to rule that Sudan may return by any means, even by force, any Sudanese citizen arrested by a foreign power or by an institution Sudan does not recognize. Washington got the hint: Last week, it ordered the reduction of its diplomatic staff in Khartoum.

American experts have been disseminating a proposal to take steps against Sudan, similar to those taken against Iraq, and to forbid flights over the Darfur area in order to prevent Sudanese air attacks. The United States has imposed sanctions on Sudan since the late 1990s, and forbids American companies from doing business there. Sudan's oilfields are currently filled with Chinese firms.

Now Sudan is threatening counter-sanctions: to stop exporting gum arabic to the United States and any country that supports the arrest warrant against al-Bashir. Gum arabic, a resin made from the bark of the Senegalese acacia tree, is used in soft drinks. Sudan produces about 70 per cent of the total world supply.

The arrest warrant aroused major controversy in Arab countries. They are once again perceived as incapable of preventing western intervention into their affairs.

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Israeli police officers killed in West Bank attack

JTA

JERUSALEM — Two Israeli police officers were killed in a shooting attack in the Jordan Valley.

A group calling itself the Imad Mugniyeh Group claimed responsibility on Monday for the shooting in an anonymous call to a news agency, Israel Radio reported. Mugniyeh, a Hezbollah terrorist leader, was assassinated last year. Hezbollah blames Israel for the killing, though Israel has never claimed responsibility for the hit.

The men were shot at close range Sunday evening in their patrol car while driving near the settlement of Masua, in the northern West Bank, according to reports. Paramedics tried to resuscitate the victims who were found critically wounded in their overturned car. The two were pronounced dead at the scene.

David Rabinovitch, 42, and Yehezkel Ramzarker, 50, were buried Monday. An Israel Police spokesperson told Ha'aretz that the shots were likely fired by one or more Palestinian gunmen, although no Palestinian group has claimed responsibility.

Police were searching the area for the gunmen.

A 'strategic goal' of toppling Hamas

Continued from page 1

In response to the proposed deal, Israeli Arab MK Ahmed Tibi urged an international boycott of Lieberman.

"No minister should meet him, especially no Arab minister," Tibi told Reuters.

Under Israeli law, Netanyahu has until April 3 to put together an administration and have it approved by Parliament.

The agreement between Likud and Yisrael Beiteinu elicited swift expressions of concern on the part of European Union officials.

Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy chief, suggested that Europe should consider taking steps if the next Israeli government backs away from western-supported peace negotiations on creating a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

"We will be ready to do business as usual, normally with a government in Israel that is prepared to continue talking and working for a two-state solution," Solana said in Brussels. "If that is not the case, the situation would be different."

Lieberman's party won the third-largest number of seats in a Feb. 10 election that saw Israel swing to the right after a 22-day offensive in the Gaza Strip, territory run by Hamas Islamists opposed to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' peace efforts.

The coalition accord sets a "strategic goal" of toppling Hamas rule in the enclave, going beyond Israel's current aim of halting rocket fire, and could complicate western efforts to reopen Gaza border crossings to vital goods.

Livni has demanded a commitment from Netanyahu to a two-state solution as a condition for joining a coalition. She is also seeking a power-sharing deal by which she and Netanyahu would rotate as prime minister.

Netanyahu wants to shift the focus of peace talks from territorial to economic issues, a plan rejected by Palestinians.

Stay out of internal Arab disputes, Saudi Arabia warns Iran

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JERUSALEM — Saudi Arabia's top diplomat on Sunday urged Iran to stay out of internal Arab disputes, in particular in Lebanon and among the Palestinians.

Iran's foreign minister made a surprise visit to Saudi Arabia amid rising tensions between the Islamic Republic and the Arab world.

Manouchehr Mottaki was met by his Saudi counterpart, Prince Saud al-Faisal, at Riyadh Air Force base and met later with the Saudi monarch.

The visit came after Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria held a mini-summit in Riyadh last week to patch up their differences, which largely revolve around the role of Iran in the region.

Iran supports Islamist movements Hamas and Hezbollah and is often at odds with U.S.-allied Arab regimes in the region. Arab nations such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia are also wary of Iran's nuclear program.

At a news conference Sunday, al-Faisal called for mutual respect between his nation and Iran.

"Although we appreciate the Iranian concern in Arab issues, from our point of view, this should be conducted through the legitimate Arab doorways," he said.

Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit accused Iran last week of manipulating Arab states to increase its influence, and Saudi Arabia has called for a unified Arab approach to Iran.

Syria is Iran's closest Arab ally, something Saudi Arabia and Egypt would like to change.

Pope regrets Williamson affair

JTA

ROME — Pope Benedict XVI met with Israeli rabbis last week in a bid to further repair the rift created by the Vatican's relationship to a Holocaust-denying bishop.

The meeting last Thursday with a delegation from Israel's Chief Rabbinate came days after the Pope wrote a letter to bishops admitting errors on how he handled the lifting of Bishop Richard Williamson's excommunication.

"This was not just another meeting," Haifa Chief Rabbi She'ar-Yashuv Cohen, who headed the rabbinical delegation, told reporters. "This was a special experience, a turning point, the end of a crisis. We could not have expected a warmer reception."

During the meeting, according to the Vatican, the Pope told the rabbis that during his May trip to the Holy Land he intended "to pray especially for the precious gift of unity and peace both within the region and for the worldwide human family."

He expressed hope that his visit might "also help to deepen the dialogue of the Church with the Jewish people so that Jews and Christians and also Muslims may live in peace and harmony in this Holy Land."

Pope Benedict XVI admitted in the letter to bishops that his rehabilitation of a Holocaust-denying bishop backfired.

The remarkable letter, whose text was officially released last Thursday by the Vatican, also says the Vatican must become Internet savvy to prevent further mishaps.

Benedict specifically addressed the Jan. 21 lifting of the excommunication order on Bishop Richard Williamson and three other traditionalist bishops, saying it unleashed "an avalanche of protests" whose "bitterness laid bare wounds deeper than those of the present moment."

Lifting the excommunications had been intended to heal a rift in the church. But due to the uproar over Bishop Williamson, the Pope said, it "suddenly appeared as something completely different: as the repudiation of reconciliation between Christians and Jews," and a revocation of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

The Pope continued: "A gesture of reconciliation with an ecclesial group engaged in a process of separation thus turned into its very antithesis: an apparent step backwards with regard to all the steps of reconciliation between Christians and Jews taken since the Council – steps which my own work as a theologian had sought from the beginning to take part in and support."

This, Benedict said, he "can only deeply regret."

"I have been told that consulting the information available on the Internet would have made it possible to perceive the problem early on. I have learned the lesson that in the future in the Holy See we will have to pay greater attention to that source of news," the Pope said.

Pontiffs very rarely issue documents admitting errors in such a detailed and personal way. Benedict said he was particularly hurt by the "open hostility" from within the Church itself.

"Precisely for this reason, I thank all the more our Jewish friends, who quickly helped to clear up the misunderstanding and to restore the atmosphere of friendship and trust which – as in the days of Pope John Paul II – has also existed throughout my pontificate and, thank God, continues to exist."

World Jewish Congress president Ronald Lauder praised the Pope.

"The Pope has found clear and unequivocal words regarding Bishop Williamson's Holocaust denial, and he deserves praise for admitting that mistakes were made within the Vatican in the handling of this affair," Lauder said in a statement.

"The Pope's letter conveys the essential requirements for interreligious dialogue: candour and the willingness to tackle difficult issues squarely. His expressed anguish at the events following the Holocaust-denying statements by [Bishop] Williamson reflects the similar emotional pain felt by Jews worldwide during this affair," he said.

"We reciprocate his words of appreciation for Jewish efforts to restore interreligious dialogue and will continue to work with the Catholic Church to further strengthen mutual understanding and respect."

In a related development, Rome Jewish leaders said the pontiff will visit the main synagogue in Rome in the fall.

Israel Briefs

Schalit report denied

Hamas' deputy leader denied reports that he received a videotape of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit. Moussa Abu Marzouk made his denial in an interview last week with the London-based newspaper a-Sharq al-Aws. Marzouk also said he had not been given a letter from the soldier, as had been reported. "I have no information on Schalit," he was quoted in the interview as saying. "I don't know if he's alive or dead. The factions aren't willing to give any information on him." The Kuwaiti newspaper al-Jarida had reported that Marzouk was given a tape and a letter last month by the commander of Hamas' military wing, Ahmad Jabari, during his short trip to Gaza after attending Palestinian reconciliation talks in Egypt. A senior Israeli source had told Israel Radio that the Prime Minister's Office had no knowledge of the video. Schalit was abducted in a cross-border raid in July 2006.

Katsav denies sex charges

Moshe Katsav accused Israeli authorities and the press of a "witch hunt," and emphasized his innocence on sex charges. The former Israeli president blasted Attorney General Menahem Mazuz and the law enforcement establishment during a 2-1/2-hour news conference last week. Mazuz announced that he was ready to indict Katsav on rape and indecent assault charges as well as obstruction of justice. Stressing his innocence, Katsav said authorities and the press were carrying out a "lynch and a witch hunt" against him. Katsav was first accused in 2006 and stepped down as president shortly before his term ended in June 2007. He was replaced by Shimon Peres. Katsav struck a plea deal in June 2007 under which the rape charges would be dropped, but last April he reneged on the deal.

– files from JTA and Ha'aretz

Ballerinas are rehearsing in Tel Aviv.

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ISRAEL

Star producer gives Indie band's EP professional quality

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

The first thing that strikes you about Urban Preacher's debut EP is that it sounds different than most unsigned indie bands' EPs. This isn't a one-person folkie singer-songwriter acoustic disc; it's a full-sounding, polished, almost professional EP. It's anything but unplugged.

"A lot of indie bands are putting out CDs that all sound like indie records," says Jordan Safer, 22, the Toronto band's keyboardist, guitarist and harmonica player. "We wanted to give people value for their money."

To that end, Urban Preacher got George Massenburg to produce the self-titled EP. Massenburg has recorded with Billy Joel, Kenny Loggins, Journey, James Taylor and Linda Ronstadt, and is an adjunct professor with McGill University's department of music research.

It was Massenburg's idea to record this live "off the floor" in the studio, giving the EP a raw, live, powerful feel.

"Everything was done live off the floor in 2-1/2 days," Safer, the group's main songwriter says. "There's no fiddling about, only the backing vocals are dubbed."

The next thing that strikes you is the powerful vocal styles of former New Yorker Myrrhine Faller.

"If you don't have a strong vocalist, you don't have a strong group," Safer says. Without a good singer, no matter how good the song is, "it's not going to get out there."

Faller's voice reminds me at times of Canadian singer Alannah Myles. His soulful voice helps shape the bluesy sound of Urban Preacher. Safer describes the music as "dirty Southern rock." What does that mean? "It has a roots feel and a country feel. It's similar to the Black Crowes," he said of the blues-oriented rock group that sold more than 20 million records.

"We're sort of a cross between [American soul-funk] singer Sharon Jones and the Black Crowes. We're also very influenced by the pedal steel guitar sound of Southern rock like the Allman Brothers."

Safer met vocalist Faller in Montreal, where he was studying political science at McGill University. "I met her through the Montreal music scene. We hit if off, and she became the band's singer right from our first show."

The band went through a revolving door of musicians before Safer moved back to Toronto with Faller and settled with the current six musicians, including a sax player.

Although Safer is the only Jewish member of the band, Urban Preacher does not play on Friday evenings and holidays.

"They're a great group of gentiles," he says, because of their acceptance of his beliefs. Safer recalls meeting Jewish reggae artist Matisyahu who stuck to his beliefs, refusing to play on Shabbat.

"It's all about having core values," he says. "People will always respect that. I'll never forgive myself otherwise."

He says that once, while in another band, he turned down a Friday evening gig with James Brown's backup group.

Since forming a year ago, Urban Preacher has been playing its songs in venues from the Maritimes to Toronto. He says that gigging is one way to stand out in the crowd.

"Live, live, live," he says. "You have to connect with people. We go back and forth between Toronto and the East Coast. We want to be the band that everyone wants to go see."

He says an Urban Preacher gig is high energy and "in your face.

"We make our audience part of the show. Our shows are worth every penny. We encourage our audience to get up and dance. Even if you're making great music, you need to connect with them. If you don't interact with them, they won't remember you. You're a much more sustainable group if you're a good live band first."

The group's EP, recorded in December, has been getting airplay on college radio stations and has charted on MySpace and CD Baby.

The six songs on this EP are a good collection of strong, soulful, bluesy rock songs, and the band is not afraid to throw in a bit of rap here and there.

Urban Preacher is on YouTube with Urban Preacher Promotional Video – a 70-second video clip of the group. Their music is also on the group's myspace.com/urbanpreacher site. The EP is available on itunes.ca.

Urban Preacher is touring the East Coast until March 21, before returning to the Horseshoe Tavern in Toronto for Bookie's Edge102.1FM Nu Music Night on March 24. They also have upcoming gigs in Montreal and Ottawa. Check out their MySpace for dates and venues.

Jordan Safer, left, wails on the harp at the Horseshoe Tavern in Toronto. At right, he's pictured with the rest of Urban Preacher including singer Myrrhine Faller.

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Cutting-edge world music group favours Hebrew

By ADAM MICHAEL SEGAL
Special to The CJN

After only a few moments of hearing Jaffa Road's debut CD Sun Place, listeners of all stripes will likely agree that this fusion band truly plays a world of music.

From Afro-Caribbean jazz and ancient Ladino songs to reggae beats and Arabian grooves, this new group creates an alchemy of distinct tunes.

"Our sound is the sum total of a journey through many musical places and influences," says band founder and composer Aaron Lightstone.

"I believe we have found a fresh and exciting way of blending together a number of musical cultures, with the end result of producing new music that has not been heard before."

In association with the Ashkenaz Foundation and the Small World Music Society, the group will be releasing its inaugural CD at a live gig on March 25 at Lula Lounge in Toronto.

The concert will be recorded by CBC Radio One for a future broadcast.

Beyond their cutting-edge sound, what's particularly different about the group is that although they are a multi-ethnic mosaic of Canadian musicians, many of their tunes are sung in Hebrew.

"Jewishness and love of Hebrew language and culture is the starting point for many of our compositions," says Lightstone, an accredited music therapist raised in Thornhill, Ont.

"What we are doing is part of a renaissance of Jewish and Hebrew culture."

Indeed, with songs like Betzet Yisrael from Psalm 114 and Tiftach Li Et Halayla, adapted from the lyrics of Song of Songs, Jaffa Road is innovating in the annals of nouveau Jewish culture.

The origins of the group can be traced back to Tel Aviv where Lightstone was inspired by Shlomo Bar and Habrera Hateeveet, whom he heard in a small club.

"I wanted to play in a group like that," he recalls.

"So I returned to Canada with the intention to create a world music group with Jewish roots… Over time, I met musicians who were into doing this, too."

Lightstone, who plays the guitar, oud, saz and synthesizer, met quite a troop of fellow musicians.

Multi-lingual lead singer Aviva Chernick is an accomplished cantorial soloist who also acts and dances.

Sax player Sundar Viswanathan is a tenured professor of jazz studies at York University who has performed and recorded around the world with the some of the biggest names in jazz.

Bassist and producer Chris Gartner has performed with such stars as members of the Barenaked Ladies and the Band, and drummer Jeff Wilson, who jams on the Latin and Arabic percussion, has appeared alongside Sultans of String.

The debut CD also features five guest musicians.

Looking to the future, Jaffa Road wants to drive along new routes and build on the momentum that has already steered them well.

"We want to play lots of music, make and sell lots of discs and get our music into some movies," says Lightstone.

"I feel very privileged to work with these people."

For tickets, visit www.smallworldmusic.com/concert29.php.

More information about the band can be found at www.ashkenazfestival.com or www.jaffaroadmusic.com.

Jon Lovitz to reveal 'the true me' in solo show

By DAVID SILVERBERG
Special to The CJN

If the real Jon Lovitz had peeked out from behind the characters he has played, Hollywood would have seen the intellect beyond the humour: Saturday Night Live's Chanukah Harry might have waxed poetic about Jewish morals and The Critic's Jay Sherman could have dissected the Israeli elections.

In fact, Toronto and Ottawa audiences will see the real Lovitz during his Ontario stand-up tour – he'll perform at Ottawa's Centrepointe Theatre on March 20 and then visit Toronto's Panasonic Theatre on March 22.

In an interview with The CJN, Lovitz, 52, said his solo act will show a tell-like-it-is side to his personality. "The whole act is the true me and how I think," Lovitz says from his Los Angeles home. "I talk about everything from [actor and comedian] Bob Saget to sex."

Audiences can expect a mix of Jewish humour and topical riffing, plus a few attacks on the hot-button issues of today such as gay marriage. But don't come to Lovitz's act hoping to see one-liner SNL characters such as Tommy "Yeah, that's the ticket" Flanagan.

"I once tried doing all those SNL bits, but it just didn't work," Lovitz admits.

But what does work, judging by a conversation with Lovitz, is infusing the comedy with an intellect the public don't see from the actor who appears on their television sets plugging Subway sandwiches.

When asked about his associations with the Jewish faith, Lovitz launches into a theory of how Jews may not necessarily be the Chosen People. Rather, the Jewish people chose their own path."It's not a race but a religion, because people can choose to be Jewish," he says. "It's a way of thinking, a way of respecting all living creatures."

Lovitz says his mind has been wrestling with intriguing philosophies on religion because he's been reading a book focusing on Jewish morality.

Wait. Jewish morality from the actor behind SNL's The Devil and Master Thespian?

"You have to be smart to have a sense of humour," Lovitz declares. "It's inherent in the Jewish culture. Education is valued in our people, and so is intelligence. And to phrase truths you have to be brimming with that kind of intellect."

The comedian is no stranger to finding the truth behind the joke, playing not just laugh-heavy roles in his 40-plus films but also more thoughtful characters, such as a baseball scout in A League of Their Own and a lingering ex-husband in I Could Never Be Your Woman. But one of the main highlights of Lovitz's career, according to the thespian himself?

"I loved working on City Slickers II," he says, "because I got to be with Billy Crystal, Jack Palance, some fine actors."

These days, Lovitz isn't diving into movie roles as he once did, instead focusing on his standup tours and planning to open his own comedy club in Los Angeles in the next few months. He also finds time to relax by playing tennis and golf.

It will be interesting to see who emerges onstage during his Toronto and Ottawa gigs – the comedian quick to deliver the one-liners and insightful theories on daily living or the chin-stroking philosopher with more than a few footnotes on Jewish history. If we're lucky, we'll see a combination of both.

Lovitz performs at the Centrepoint Theatre in Ottawa on March 20, and the Panasonic Theatre in Toronto on March 22. For tickets to the Toronto show, call 416-872-1212; for the Ottawa show, call 613-580-2700.

Jon Lovitz

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Spring in the City of Brotherly Love

By NANCY WIGSTON
Special to The CJN

Philadelphia blooms in spring.

The city bursts into renewed life with its annual flower show. The oldest exhibit of its kind in America, the Philadelphia Flower Show attracts masses of people to view the latest in garden design, or, at the very least, to purchase fresh bunches of pussy willows.

Sunshine warms the venerable old cityscape, especially the clutch of 18th-century buildings on Independence Mall, where Thomas Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The Liberty Bell – a cracked but ever-potent object – is housed in its own building. And across the street, a new and exciting project is underway: a new National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH), slated for completion in 2010.

The Jewish community has deep roots in Philadelphia, says Jay Nachman, my guide to the NMAJH in its current headquarters, at 55 North 5th St. It all began with Mikveh Israel, known as the "Synagogue of the Revolution." In 1738, a merchant named Nathan Levy applied to the family of William Penn, Royal Proprietors of Pennsylvania, for a piece of ground to bury his child in accordance with Jewish ritual. A larger burial ground "for several Jews" was granted in 1740. During the War of Independence, Jews from elsewhere in the colony sought refuge in Philadelphia, where many joined the revolutionary fight.

The freedom offered by the new republic is underscored by a letter in the synagogue's archives, written by George Washington, guaranteeing freedom of religion. Ben Franklin pledged a generous five pounds ($800 in today's U.S. dollars) to the congregation. Over time, people moved on, and synagogues were built in other parts of the city, but during the celebratory 1976 Bicentennial Year, the city's first synagogue was reborn. Its bicentennial service, in the Sephardi tradition, echoed those given more than 200 years previously, with the omission, naturally, of references to King George.

The archive-rich museum shares a lobby with Mikveh Israel, but has long outgrown its quarters, hence the solid support for a new 100,000-square-foot space at 5th and Market streets, facing the Liberty Bell. The new five-storey building will house archives, permanent and visiting exhibitions, an auditorium and educational facilities. It was designed by architect James Polshek and his team to resemble two interlocking volumes, linked by a light-filled atrium: "Where freedom was born, a museum that celebrates Jewish freedom."

The Love sculpture at JFK Park, Philadelphia. [Nancy Wigston photo]

Moreover, the spirit of this museum is uniquely American. As Nachman says, "People hear the word 'Jewish' but they don't hear the word 'American.'" Yet Jews have been vitally present in America for more than 350 years. The Philadelphia community, one of the largest in the country, established an important early publishing centre and is renowned as the home of philanthropist Rebecca Gratz, founder of the nation's first Hebrew Sunday school.

The current exhibit in NMAJH, Shaping Space, Shaping Meaning, challenges visitors to determine what the new museum, one block south of the current space, will offer. What, for example, should be the tone of the texts that accompany colourful individuals (from 1654 to the present) in the core exhibition?

Contemporary issues are addressed in Drawing the Line, which underscores the need for continuing dialogue by posing a series of provocative questions, from the oddball-sounding, "Are Jews white?" to core queries, including "Does anti-Semitism exist in America?" and "Is Israel the homeland for all Jews?" Visitors contribute their views on file cards, reminded that "there are no right answers, only discussions." Their answers appear under each question, divided into categories: "yes," "no," and "um."

In the museum's new headquarters, icons of American liberty – Independence Mall, the Liberty Bell – will provide visual reminders of historical context for the American Jewish story, told through a collection of objects that includes Franklin's works, translated into Yiddish.

Can't wait for the new museum to be completed? No worries, there's no bad time to visit the City of Brotherly Love. After adding your views to the current exhibit-discussion, take a walk around the old quarter for more glimpses into the past, including flag-maker Betsy Ross' house and Elfreth's Alley, one of the oldest continuously inhabited streets in America. And no one put the "LOVE" into 20th-century Philly like sculptor Robert Indiana, whose LOVE sculpture adorns John F. Kennedy Park, behind the city's stunningly ornate city hall. Commissioned for the 1976 bicentennial, Indiana's sculpture draws a steady stream of visitors who pose for photos in front of it. While snapping "Love" photos of a native Philadelphian and her visiting friend, I notice the direct line between the park and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Ben Franklin Parkway stretches between them, "just like the Champs-Elysees," boasts the girl from Philly.

The Museum of Art, a stunning neoclassical structure, was made famous around the world by movie star Sylvester Stallone when, as prize fighter Rocky Balboa, he ran up its vast staircase, pumping his fists in the air. "On a warm day like this," my new friend tells me, "you'll see lots of people running up the steps." She was right. The Rocky statue on ground level draws its share of fist pumpers, while fitter Philadelphians run up the main or "Rocky Steps" to impersonate the underdog winner, just like in the movie. On a sunny morning, the walk from Love Park to the museum offers its own highlights; in addition to great views and flags from all nations, there are important works of art. At 17th and Ben Franklin, stands the city's imposing Holocaust Memorial, designed in 1964 by sculptor Nathan Rapoport.

Close to central Philly, the Washington Square neighbourhood features row after charming row of brick townhouses. Follow Spruce or Pine Street eastward to Society Hill, where, near Dock Street and the Delaware River, you'll find Philly's favourite new restaurant, Zahav, an Israeli import.

In a time when even renowned eateries seem to be having trouble attracting recession-weary patrons, this brainchild of partners Steve Cook and chef Michael Solomonov is bustling. Esquire Magazine calls it "one of the best 20 new restaurants in America," with a cuisine fashioned after Solomonov's native Israel. To prepare for this radical experiment in fresh, tapas-style eating, the staff visited Israel to sample the real thing.

Meals are "kosher-inspired," says manager Elon Gigi, who arrived in Philly from Ashdod, Israel, 4-1/2 half years ago. Servers, clad in desert-chic short-sleeved khaki shirts over T-shirts with Hebrew lettering, are kept busy describing house specialties that include four spicy condiments, from mild to "wow," extra-creamy hummus with oven-hot flatbread, as well as eclectic choices such as Moroccan lamb and Bulgarian roasted red peppers.

The room is high-ceilinged and airy, and Israeli music plays in the background. Multitudes of dishes arrive, designed to be shared by the whole table. Zahav's tasty fare includes a remarkable version of fried cauliflower that Elon tells me was named "dish of the year" by a major American food magazine. The success of this new kid on the block, in the heart of the historic waterfront district, marks yet another chapter in the evolving narrative of Jewish culture in Philadelphia.

If You Go: For information on the city of Philadelphia: www.gophila.com; The National Museum of American Jewish History, Independence Mall East, 55 North 5th St., 215-923-3811, www.nmajh.org, free admission; Zahav Restaurant, 237 Saint James Pl., 215-625-8800, www.zahavrestaurant.com.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

NOAH'S GREAT RAINBOW FOCUSES ON AFTERSHOCKS OF GENOCIDE

Noah's Great Rainbow, a new Canadian play by **Sam Chaiton** featuring Afro-klezmer-rap music, presents an unlikely friendship between a Holocaust survivor and a young survivor of the Rwandan genocide, a friendship that blossoms into truth telling, laughter, shared wisdom and, ultimately, an extraordinary gesture of love.

The Showcase Production is directed by **Alon Nashman** and features **Don Francks** and **Mighty Popo**, and music by **David Buchbinder**, **Waleed Abdulhamid** and **Popo Murigande**.

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. Tickets $29 for public performances on March 28, 8 p.m. and April 4, 2 and 8 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org. Student performances are also being offered. Student group tickets, 647-866-0245 or paulene@noahsgreatrainbow.com. Website: www.noahsgreatrainbow.com.

* * *

Holocaust Musical Drama: An Evening with Madame F, a musical drama by **Claudia Stevens**, was inspired by the story of Fania Fenelon, who performed in the women's orchestra at Auschwitz. Stevens takes on the persona of an elderly Madame F, reflecting on her experiences in the infamous Nazi death camp.

A classically trained pianist who lives in Williamsburg, Va., Stevens was raised Methodist but discovered as an adult that her parents were Jewish Holocaust survivors. She has widely performed Madame F, which was produced for television by PBS. Tickets $18, preferred seating $36. Leah Posluns Theatre, 4588 Bathurst St. Thursday, March 19, 7:30 p.m. 416-635-2883, ext. 5153, or hschwartz@ujafed.org

* * *

Hillel of Greater Toronto, in co-operation with the Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation and other community groups, presents Artzy, the second annual multi-media art exhibit on the theme of The 1,000 Faces of Israel. The evening includes live entertainment, appetizers, complimentary drinks, gifts, great art and more. Bata Shoe Museum, 327 Bloor St. W. $10, students $7. Sunday, March 22, 7 p.m. 416-913-2424, hilleltoronto.org

* * *

Sophie Milman in Conversation: The Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company presents the third in its series of Conversations On the Green with award-winning vocalist Sophie Milman. The one-on-one chat is hosted by journalist and radio personality **Ralph Benmergui**.

Born in Russia, Milman immigrated to Israel with her family as a child and came to Canada at 16. She was offered a recording contract after only three professional singing engagements. Her debut album sold more than 100,000 copies, and her second CD, Make Someone Happy, won a 2008 Juno for best vocal jazz album. St. Lawrence Centre, Jane Mallet Theatre. $15; subscribers $10. Sunday, March 29, 7:30 p.m. 416-366-7723, www.hgjewishtheatre.com

Milman is also performing in concert at the new Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts on March 31. Contact the box office at 905-787-8811.

* * *

Friends of Yiddish presents Shpiel or No Shpiel, an afternoon of music trivia and performance with singer **Mitch Smolkin**, pianist **Nina Shapilsky** and host **Jack Newman**. Remember what **Molly Picon** sang in the much-loved film Mamele? How about the song that made **Aaron Lebedeff** famous? You will have a chance to call out the answers or find them out and then be entertained with a performance. Members free, guests $5. Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Sunday, March 29, 2 p.m. RSVP, Sandy Bokser 416-736-8073 or 416-548-1440.

* * *

Hemingway at Winchevsky: The Winchevsky Centre and the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association present author and master storyteller **Brian Gordon Sinclair** performing his one-man play Hemingway's HOT Havana, to raise funds for hurricane relief in Cuba. Considered to be the world's foremost dramatic interpreter of **Ernest Hemingway**, Sinclair will have you believe the literary legend is standing before you. Suggested donation $15. Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave. Saturday March 28, 8 p.m. Doors open 7:30 p.m. 416-789-5502, www.winchevsky.org

* * *

Names in the News: Sir Lawrence Freedman, one of Britain's most distinguished historians, has won the 2009 Lionel Gelber Prize for his book A Choice of Enemies: America Confronts the Middle East, published in Canada by Doubleday Canada.

"If you were to select only one book to understand the turmoil and confusion of events in the Middle East over the past 30 years, this is a perfect choice," said **Noah Rubin**, chair of the Lionel Gelber Prize and grandnephew of the Canadian scholar, author and diplomat for whom it is named.

Now in its 19th year, the $15,000 prize is presented by the Lionel Gelber Foundation in partnership with the Munk Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto and Foreign Policy magazine. Freedman will accept the award in Toronto on March 31 at the Munk Centre, where he delivers the annual Lionel Gelber lecture. www.utoronto.ca/mcis/gelber/

* * *

Arts in Brief

• "Rock and Roll Jews: Burt Bacharach & Hal David – The Cool Sound of the Sixties" is the topic of the next Music Talk with **Jordan Klapman**. $9 at the door, includes a light breakfast. Miles Nadal JCC, Sunday, March 22, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 133, music@mnjcc.org

• Active Seniors presents **Prof. Adam Fuerstenberg** discussing "The Life & Work of Mordecai Richler, Satirist, Social Critic." $2 includes bagel and coffee. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday, March 26, 1:30 p.m. 416-924 6211, ext. 155

• **Gerald Tulchinsky**, professor emeritus of history at Queen's University and author of Canada's Jews: A People's Journey, speaks on "Anti-Semitism in the Interwar Years" at Georgian College Theatre, Barrie, Ont. Free admission. Monday, March 23, 1 p.m.

• **Shlomit Kriger** seeks poems, songs, short stories and other pieces of creative writing from Holocaust survivors for a proposed anthology. Submission deadline is May 29. For details, e-mail holocaustanthology@yahoo.ca or write Holocaust Anthology, c/o Shlomit Kriger, P.O. Box 984, 1 Promenade Circle, Thornhill, Ont. L4J 8G7

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Books & Authors

Crossing the yellow-taped line into mystery territory

By BILL GLADSTONE
Special to The CJN

Toronto lawyer and writer Robert Rotenberg has produced a credible "police procedural" murder mystery called Old City Hall that is set in Toronto and features the famous building of the title – now home to an array of criminal courtrooms – as an iconic centrepiece of the story.

Rotenberg's debut novel focuses on Kevin Brace, a leading radio personality who commands a million-dollar salary.

Bright and early one winter morning, he answers the door of his lakefront condominium and tells his newspaper delivery man, "I killed her." Inside, his wife lies dead in the bathtub, victim of a stabbing.

Robert Rotenberg

Officer Daniel Kennicott and his partner, Nora Bering, soon arrive at the crime scene, which they secure for Detective Ari Greene and the other operatives who will follow. From there the story proceeds in bite-sized chapters that detail the activities of a motley crew of crime professionals who variously investigate the murder, divine its forensics, prosecute or defend the chief suspect, make backroom deals in the corridors of justice, and write sensational newspaper stories about the killing.

Rotenberg is an insider to the legal system and an expert guide in the machinations of justice as it is carried on in that Queen Street landmark familiarly known to his colleagues as "the Hall." He also clearly enjoys showing off the colourful neighbourhoods and locales of Toronto, whose residents he depicts correctly as representing a diverse range of ethnic and national backgrounds. Locations include Gryfe's Bakery, the Don Jail, the Islands, The Bay on Queen Street and Vesta Lunch on Bathurst Street.

The story takes place between the dead of winter and the arrival of summer. The city is caught in the grip of Maple Leaf fever as its once-glorious hockey team holds steady through the playoffs to capture the eternally elusive Stanley Cup. Yes – the Stanley Cup. As with various aspects of the story, readers are required to suspend their disbelief.

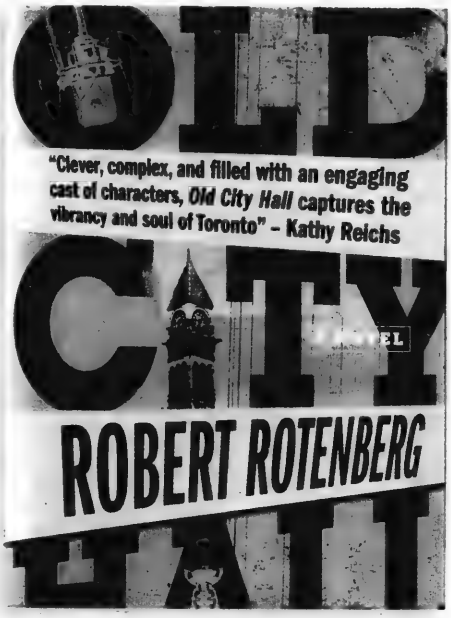
Since murder mysteries have become a staple of modern popular literature, an author would have to get up pretty early in the morning to outwit the modern reader. Unfortunately, Rotenberg ties up his story with a series of revelations that the attentive reader could have guessed at the outset. One is left feeling slightly manipulated because of the prior omission of various pieces of key information. When the police and legal prosecutors take Brace's initial confession at face value, the reader senses that they are inept. The author treads a fine line between skilful storytelling and advancing the tale with annoying little baby-steps of plot.

In its promotional copy, publisher Simon and Schuster Canada promotes Rotenberg as the latest in a succession of famed lawyers-turned-suspense writers such as Scott Turow and John Grisham. The jacket copy asserts that Rotenberg does for Toronto what Leonard Elmore does for Florida, Ian Rankin does for Edinburgh, and Turow for Chicago. (The jury is still out.)

Further, the publisher has scored an international publishing coup by selling rights to Old City Hall in the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Russia, Japan and Israel. Whether the book actually deserves all this hype and attention, time alone will tell. Certainly there are no great characters in its pages, nor any lofty truths, and it evokes no grand emotions whatsoever.

* * *

I read an insightful comment recently to the effect that there are more people interested in writing books today than there are people interested in reading them. The crafting of murder mysteries seems to have a particular allure.


OLD
"Clever, complex, and filled with an engaging cast of characters, Old City Hall captures the vibrancy and soul of Toronto" – Kathy Reichs
CITY
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ROBERT ROTENBERG
HALL

Years ago, when I edited books for a leading pulp-fiction publisher in Toronto, my senior editor allowed an unruly pyramid of manuscripts to accumulate behind his desk until it nearly reached the ceiling. I used to get $50 or $75 to read the more promising of these manuscripts and produce a one-page plot synopsis. I read two manuscripts a day.

Today, as then, there seems to be no end of aspiring mystery novelists. People seem to think it is a glamorous occupation, but probably less than one per cent of the aspirants ever see their work into print. Those who do often capitalize on their success do this by writing a series based upon a single detective. The most famous example in Canada is Howard Engel, whose books involving Jewish detective Benny Cooperman have become a beloved addition to Canadian literature.

Here are a few other notable examples. Honour Among Men, a new Inspector Green mystery by Barbara Fradkin, was published a while ago by Rendezvous Crime Books. Fradkin is an accomplished writer whose previous novel, Fifth Son, won the Arthur Ellis Award for Best Crime Novel. This latest novel takes place in Ottawa and Yugoslavia, and involves the same police inspector, now solving a 10-year-old mystery involving a Canadian peacekeeping unit.

Toronto lawyer-writer Morley Torgov has already produced a number of well-received novels, including A Good Place to Come From (1974) and The War to End All Wars (1998). Torgov recently ventured into crime writing with Murder in A-Major, the first in an anticipated series of Inspector Hermann Preiss mysteries. As Dusseldorf's top detective in the mid-19-th century, Preiss is called upon to solve a case involving the famed musical couple, Robert and Clara Schumann. Murder in A-Major is published by Rendezvous Crime Books.

Some years back, Winnipeg writer Allan Levine produced a series of mystery novels featuring a Jewish detective who prowled Winnipeg's seedy north end. Last year he came out with the first in a new series. In Evil of the Age: The Charles St. Clair Chronicles, Levine introduced a gumshoe journalist named Charles St. Clair who attempts to solve a murder in New York in the 1870s. The book was published by Heartland Associates. Knowing Levine's reputation as one of our most prolific scribes, he's probably finished a sequel by now.

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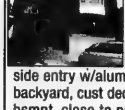

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The Canadian Jewish news

Israel & the Jewish World

Israel lobbies Chavez to curb anti-Semitism in Venezuela

By BARAK RAVID
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JERUSALEM — Israel has embarked on an intensive diplomatic campaign to persuade Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to rein in a recent wave of anti-Semitic attacks against Venezuela's Jews.

Over the past two weeks, Israel's Foreign Ministry has asked 15 different countries that maintain ties with both Israel and Venezuela to take high-level action on this issue. The use of international intermediaries is necessary, because Venezuela severed diplomatic ties with Israel and expelled all its diplomats about a month ago, in response to Israel's recent military operation in Gaza.

"There has been a significant outbreak of anti-Semitism there, and we wanted to send messages to Venezuela's president through several different channels in order to clarify the gravity with which we view the situation," a senior government source said. "We wanted them to know that in Israel's view, Chavez is responsible for the Jewish community's welfare."

Two of the countries whose assistance Israel requested are Argentina and Brazil, both of whose presidents subsequently called Chavez and relayed Israel's message. Another is Russia, and a fourth is Spain, whose foreign minister, Miguel Moratinos, is due to visit the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, soon. In addition to passing on Israel's message, Moratinos has agreed to meet with leaders of the local Jewish community.

Israeli officials believe that the strong messages have begun to have an impact on Chavez's government: Venezuelan police recently arrested several suspects in the recent anti-Semitic attacks. However, there is still great fear among Venezuela's Jewish community, which numbers some 15,000 people.

Members of the Caracas Jewish community, who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals, told Ha'aretz that Chavez has thus far given tacit backing to the growing anti-Semitism, and he could also stop it if he so desired, by giving the necessary orders to his security services. "There's an atmosphere of intimidation against the Jews," said one.

During the Gaza operation, the largest synagogue in Caracas was vandalized by unknown assailants, and several Jews were physically attacked. Earlier this month, a bomb was thrown at the Jewish community centre in Caracas. In response to growing public criticism of such incidents within his own country, Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro made a well-publicized visit last month to the synagogue that was attacked.

Australia threatens to quit 'Durban II' anti-racism meet

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

NEW YORK — Australia threatened last Thursday to withdraw from a UN conference on racism next month unless the wording of a document it considers anti-Semitic is dropped or substantially altered.

Israel and Canada have already withdrawn from the April 20 to 24 World Conference Against Racism in Geneva, amid fears Arab nations will use it to criticize Israel.

The United States has also said it will not attend the conference unless the wording of the final declaration is altered radically. Israel is calling for a boycott of the event.

"If we form the view that the text is going to lead to nothing more than an anti-Jewish, anti-Semitic harangue, an anti-Jewish propaganda exercise, Australia will not be in attendance," Foreign Minister Stephen Smith told Parliament.

In related developments, European Union countries last week stepped up their opposition to Muslim attempts to shield Islam from criticism and attack Israel through the UN conference on racism.

EU members were unusually outspoken in appearances before the UN Human Rights Council, saying that they were worried about preparations for the global racism conference to be held next month because attention was being diverted from the real problems of racial discrimination.

"I am deeply disturbed by the turn this event is taking," Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Verhagen said.

"The thematic world conference is used by some to try to force their concept of defamation of religions and their focus on one regional conflict on all of us," Verhagen told the 47-member council.

References to Israel and protection of religion in the current draft conclusion being negotiated for the so-called "Durban II" conference are unacceptable, Verhagen said.

"We cannot accept any text which would put religion above individuals, not condemn discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, condone anti-Semitism or single out Israel," he said. Denmark, Germany, Belgium and Italy voiced similar concerns.

Islamic countries, still angry over cartoons and films attacking Muslims, have been campaigning for wording that would equate criticism of a religious faith with a violation of human rights. The informal negotiations have proven difficult with many issues that marred the first UN conference on racism in 2001 re-emerging – such as criticism of Israel.

The April meeting is designed to review progress in fighting racism since the global body's first such conference eight years ago in Durban, South Africa. That 2001 meeting was dominated by clashes over the Middle East and the legacy of slavery, and particularly marred by attacks on Israel and anti-Israel demonstrations at a parallel conference of non-governmental organizations.

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Davis Cup win lifts Israel to record 8th in world rankings

By OREN KESSLER
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In the wake of its 3-2 victory against Sweden on March 8, Israel climbed to a record eighth spot in International Tennis Federation rankings this month, ahead of the Czech Republic, Australia and even France, which came in 12th. Unfortunately, Russia, Israel's competitor in its next Davis Cup match, was once again ranked first.

While the Israel Tennis Association (ITA) weighs whether to hold the July match against Russia at the National Tennis Center in Ramat Hasharon or Tel Aviv's Nokia Arena, the star of the victorious series in Sweden made no bones about his preference.

"Only Ramat Hasharon. We're not even thinking about Nokia. There's no reason to play against the Russians indoors – we love Ramat Hasharon," Harel Levy told Israeli media.

Levy was given a hero's welcome the day after winning the fifth and decisive match in Malmo, Sweden against Andreas Vinciguerra to give his team a ticket to the quarter-finals for the first time in more than 20 years.

In the new rankings, Russia edged out rival powerhouses Spain, which boasts none other than world No. 1 Rafael Nadal, and the United States, with Andy Roddick.

Russia is led by Marat Safin – a former world No. 1 currently ranked 25 – and Nikolay Davydenko, ranked 28, although Safin is weighing retirement and may bow out before his team lands at Ben-Gurion Airport. Rounding out the team are Mikhail Youzhny and Teimuraz Gabashvili.

The ITA is reportedly concerned about the effect of the July heat on spectators, and is mulling a move to the indoor home of the Maccabi Tel Aviv basketball team. The arena also has nearly twice the capacity of the tennis centre, whose centre court, known as Canada Stadium, has 6,000 seats.

Levy given a hero's welcome

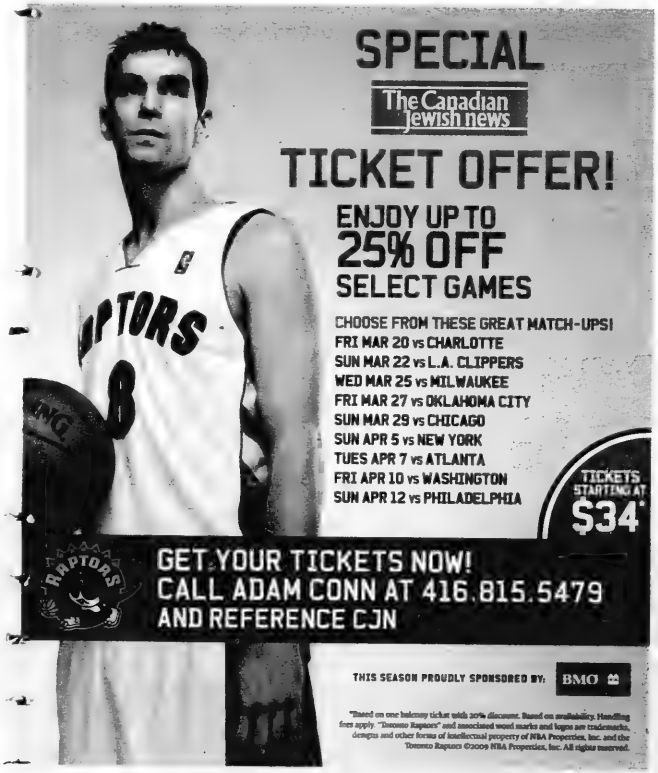
Michael Klein, the head of the tennis governing body, said: "It is the ITA's intention to hold an in-depth meeting over achieving optimal conditions for both players and fans. The goal is to give everyone a great tennis experience, with consideration towards weather conditions."

While other factors are presumably at play – ticket revenues and relations between the ITA and stadium authorities – Klein says giving fans a comfortable experience remains a top priority. "No non-professional considerations will lead to one decision or another, only the comfort of the fans," he said.

The surface at Ramat Hasharon is considered hard by world standards, a feature that plays to the advantage of Israeli competitors who are already used to it. The tough surface and even tougher crowd have earned the venue the nickname "Israhell" among visiting players.

Harel Levy

Russia's team, by contrast, is used to playing in arenas, as poor weather in that country often demands that matches be moved indoors.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Thousands protest Israel-Sweden match

JTA

STOCKHOLM — Thousands of people demonstrated against Israel during a Davis Cup match in Sweden.

About 6,000 protesters gathered on March 7, outside the matches' venue in Malmo. Some 1,000 police kept the demonstrators, many of whom tried to storm the arena, under control. Five protesters were arrested for throwing rocks. Violence also continued elsewhere in the city.

Spectators were barred from watching the Davis Cup play because the city said it could not guarantee the Israeli players' safety, with only about 300 to 400 media representatives, sponsors and guests in attendance, according to reports.

The decision to bar spectators came shortly after the United Arab Emirates refused to issue a visa to Israeli tennis standout Shahar Pe'er for a Dubai tournament last month.

"In almost every respect, the events of the past week in Sweden are a sad moment for tennis, for sports in general, and certainly for Israel. Never in my career as an athlete have I encountered such hatred and such blend of sports and politics," Israeli doubles tennis star Andy Ram said on Ynetnews last week. He added that he has never seen such tight security.

Israel defeated Sweden, 3-2, on March 8 to advance to the Davis Cup quarter-finals. In the decisive match, Harel Levy outlasted Andreas Vinciguerra in five sets in a battle that lasted 3-1/2 hours.

God can wait

By YONI GOLDSTEIN

New Views

Writing in the National Post a few weeks back, Christian television host Michael Coren and University of Western Ontario professor Ian Hunter argued that the recession might very well bring people back to God.

The Church, Coren argued, "will be at the forefront of caring and coping in all this mess." And Hunter mused that "God's economy somehow works in... mysterious way[s]." The recession, wrote Coren, "might force us, perhaps kicking and screaming, to re-evaluate the meaning of life, the universe and the banking system."

On the flip side, the liberal magazine New Scientist warned recently that an economic drought is the worst time to start thinking irrationally. In a February editorial titled "The credit crunch could be a boon for irrational belief," the magazine's editors noted that "when human beings lose control over their lives, they become more prone to superstition, spiritual searchings and conspiracy theories." This could produce an unfortunate outcome: "In a recession, or any other time of uncertainty, you are more likely to make bad decisions" – and by "bad decisions," New Scientist means turning toward religion for answers.

Call me skeptical, but I'm not inclined to believe either the pro- or the anti-religion sides in this debate. Each party, it seems, is just using the latest headlines to further their very aggressive agendas. These responses to the market's collapse are, if anything, entirely predictable.

Religious leaders simply need to keep two documents on file – one that blames human beings when things go bad, and another that praises God when things are good. The atheists have it even easier: they only need to hold on to the one that restates the irrationality of a higher being, and simply edit it for content, depending on the latest developments. Has anyone stopped to consider that the recession might not have anything to do with God, one way or the other?

It's odd that religious leaders who so often wax poetic about "free will" and the beauty of a God who allows his people to make their own decisions are now convinced that market turmoil is a wake-up call from a higher being. And it's equally strange that the rationalists who would have us believe that humanity sinks and swims on its own merits (or lack thereof) are warning us not to look for meaning in a collapse caused by the worst forms of human greed and consumption.

Which is to say that both theories are a serious reach. Sometimes a recession is just a recession.

Coren and Hunter, and the people at New Scientist, are playing on human emotion. Note their language: Coren says that what humanity needs is "caring and coping in all this mess." New Scientist argues that we have lost "control over [our] lives." This is the language of fear, carefully worded to evince catastrophe and panic.

Don't let these words ensnare you. Getting trapped in this war of attrition is the worst thing you can do right now. Far better would be to get your personal affairs in order and simply wait for the markets to turn again, as they inevitably will. My advice: leave the philosophizing about the larger meaning of shrinking pensions and portfolios to someone else.

Frankly, all of this hemming and hawing – this bigger-picture meditation – looks bad on both the religious and rationalist camps. The important thing right now isn't to win the war for God or no-God, but to work our way out of this jam and do the best we can to learn from the mistakes that led to the financial crisis. God can wait, or simply continue to not exist, depending on your worldview.

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1/2 c chopped parsley
1 1/2 tsp salt
1/3 c almonds, toasted, chopped
3 lg eggs
1/2 c chopped dill
1/2 tsp black pepper

Cook cauliflower in large pot of boiling salted water, about 10 min. Drain; transfer to large bowl; mash coarsely. Heat 3 tblsp oil in skillet over medium-high heat. Add leeks; sauté about 5 min. Add leek mixture to cauliflower. Mix in matzo meal. Beat eggs; add 1 tblsp. parsley, 1 tblsp. dill, salt, pepper; mix well. Stir into cauliflower mixture. Brush large baking dish with 1 tblsp. oil. Pour in cauliflower mixture. Mix almonds, remaining parsley, dill, 2 tblsp oil in medium bowl. Sprinkle evenly over kugel. Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake kugel uncovered until set in center, about 35 min. Let stand 10 min. to set.

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REMEMBERING OUR YESTERDAYS

By BILL GLADSTONE

PASSOVER SEDER CIRCA 1924

This photo, taken in a home on Gladstone Avenue in Toronto around 1924, shows my great-grandparents, Davis and Blumah Alexander (at the head of the table), and some of their 13 children with spouses and some grandchildren. Cohen, Kendall, Kigg and Lester are some of the families represented. Several in the photo are still with us, including Nina Kendall (Zlotkin), Phyllis Lester (Bryce), and Rose Gould Cohen, third from right, who recently reached the age of 100.

A standing ovation for Jewish campus staff

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

I was privileged and honoured to sit in on a Hillel staff meeting at the University of Toronto's Wolfond Centre during Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW). My task was to give what is called *chizuk*, or strength, to those around the table, as it had been a difficult week.

I sat next to Zac Kaye, the director of Hillel and a steadfast and visionary leader. I looked out at all the campus staff members (about 15 of them) responsible for York University, Ryerson University and, of course, U of T.

I felt privileged and honoured to be part of that meeting, because I felt privy to something significant going on in the world – and everyone likes to sit next to important and courageous people.

I listened closely to the reporting. By then, I had read so much about IAW – much of it hyperbole – that hearing about this shameful event first hand, from individuals who had been eyewitnesses to it, was enlightening. I metaphorically put down the daily newspaper filled with sensationalism and listened to hear something authentic.

Around the table we went. A representative from one of the Jewish campuses (I will leave names out for security reasons) said that Jewish students were feeling intimidated on campus, especially during IAW.

Another staff said that a lot of IAW is well-organized and well thought through, and that there is a need to be concerned about its level of sophistication.

An entire spectrum of thought and opinion emanated from the meeting, reflecting fear of growing anti-Semitism on campus and the belief that Jewish students have friends everywhere. I was fascinated.

Mostly, however, I was proud of the people who were speaking. I realized as the meeting moved on that the people sitting next to me were walking the walk of activism – actually fighting the fight – and that they're integral for the preparation that's required for a 12-round battle against anti-Semitism.

Then came my turn to speak.

I told the staff that we in the community recognize the courage it takes to be a Jewish community worker on campus nowadays. I let them know that we know they are on the front lines of combatting anti-Semitism and are wading into perilous waters. "This has not gone unnoticed," I said.

I told my bold colleagues that we feel for them, knowing that they're taking the punches and under stress from forces both within the community and outside of it. I reported to them that Jews everywhere – Holocaust survivors and rabbis, as well as men, women and children up and down the Bathurst Street corridor, above Steeles and below Bloor Street – are indebted to them for their gallant leadership.

On behalf of the Canadian Jewish community, I say to campus staff and students thank you for your eternal vigilance as Jews and accolades for choosing community work as your livelihood, knowing the risks that come with it.

Unfortunately, you are now witnesses to the "oldest hatred": anti-Semitism. Your perception as Jews has likely changed, but today you are seasoned professionals, more so than yesterday. We need you. Let there be no mistake about that. We need you.

So as we forge ahead during these days when all Jews need to be awake and active, we listen closely to you on ways to stymie the hatred and on how to be strong when the night sets in and arrows of hatred are shot at us. We look to you for guidance and pledge support, in any way required.

Well done! May God always protect you, as well as Jews everywhere and all good people of the world. May the darkness you have come to see turn into light and let unity reign. Am Yisrael chai! The Nation of Israel shall live!

See Avrum's blog at http://avrum.net.

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Passover is the perfect time to clean out the clutter.

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Montreal rabbi alarmed for Venezuela's Jews

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — A Montreal rabbi has returned from a 24-hour visit to Caracas, Venezuela, convinced that its small Jewish community is in danger and that the Canadian government must intervene.

Rabbi Adam Scheier of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim made the whirlwind trip with Rabbi Avi Weiss of New York and Rabbi Shmuel Herzfeld of Washington, D.C., both of Amcha – The Coalition for Jewish Concerns, at the invitation of Venezuela's chief Ashkenazi rabbi, Pynchas Brener.

Rabbi Scheier described Caracas' 15,000 Jews as "besieged" and said he's convinced President Hugo Chavez's government is to blame for recent attacks on Jewish communal institutions and is orchestrating an anti-Semitic campaign.

Rabbi Scheier said community members told him they are afraid and feel they are at risk for more "government-sponsored" persecution and violence. "They were very honest and open about the fear they are experiencing," he said, and they believe that Chavez is behind it.

"Nothing happens in Venezuela without Chavez's blessing."

He said they pleaded with the visiting rabbis to make their plight known and to urge their governments to act.

Rabbi Scheier visited the two Jewish institutions targeted this year: a synagogue that was vandalized and ransacked in January, and a community centre damaged by an explosive last month. He also spent time at the Hebraica School, which was raided by armed government agents in November 2004 on the pretext that they were looking for weapons.

Rabbi Adam Scheier embraces students at the Hebraica School in Caracas, which was raided by the Chavez government in 2004.

Please see related story on page 51

Nothing was found, Rabbi Scheier said, and the community views this incident as a turning point: the beginning of a state-sanctioned campaign to "terrify" the community.

The following month, Chavez delivered a Christmas Eve speech denouncing "the descendants of those who crucified Christ" who have "taken possession of the riches of the world."

Relations between Venezuela and Israel soured during Israel's war with Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006, and Venezuela cut diplomatic ties with Israel after the Gaza conflict at the end of last year. Chavez, who came to power in 1999, has strengthened relations with Iran and the Arab world.

On the day he was there, Rabbi Scheier saw a newspaper with a front-page cartoon depicting a concentration camp with an Israeli soldier guarding it, reminiscent of the Nazi era. An accompanying article was headlined "The extermination of the Palestinian people continues."

Continued on page 28

Community mourns Hadassah-WIZO president

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — March 22 was to be an opportunity to celebrate Terry Schwarzfeld's recent election as the 20th national president of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) at a brunch in her honour. Instead, on March 20, she was honoured posthumously at a funeral attended by nearly 800 people.

Schwarzfeld succumbed to injuries she suffered during a brutal attack while vacationing in Barbados.

Along with her daughter-in-law, Luana Cotsman of Guelph, Ont., who is recovering from her injuries, Schwarzfeld was severely beaten Feb. 28 while the pair was walking along an isolated stretch of beach in the late afternoon. They were approached by a would-be robber, and when they told him they had nothing to give him, he attacked them with a piece of wood.

Terry Schwarzfeld

Schwarzfeld was taken to a hospital in Barbados, then airlifted to Ottawa Hospital, where she remained unconscious until she died on March 18. As yet, no one has been arrested for the attack.

The Ottawa Chevra Kadisha funeral parlour was not nearly large enough for the hundreds of people expected to attend Schwarzfeld's funeral. In fact, even the sanctuary of Agudath Israel Congregation couldn't contain the standing-room only crowd. Chairs had to be set up in the shul's foyer to allow the overflow crowd to view the ceremony on closed-circuit television.

The funeral was presided over jointly by Rabbi Charles Popky of Agudath Israel, where Schwarzfeld had been, until recent months, executive director, and Rabbi Steven Garten of Temple Israel, where Schwarzfeld and her family were members.

Continued on page 28

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The News in Brief

CANADA

Anti-Zionists Speak

EDMONTON — A pro-Palestinian group invited anti-Zionist Neturei Karta rabbi Yisroel Dovid Weiss and U.S. history professor Norton Mezviny to speak at a free conference held earlier this week in Edmonton titled Zionism Exposed. A spokesperson for the International Palestine Awareness Committee told the Edmonton Sun that the event aimed to show "there's a big difference between Zionism and Judaism" and that "Zionism is a form of extremism." Gayle Tallman, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, said the speakers are from "the furthest fringes of Judaism" and that the event would cause a rift between the city's Jewish and Arab communities.

Groups Criticized

TORONTO — More than 150 Jewish Canadians – including prominent names such as Ursula Franklin, Anton Kuerti and Judy Rebick – released a statement last week that said the mainstream Jewish community's alleged effort to suppress criticism of Israel recalls McCarthyism in the 1950s and deflects attention from what they call Israel's war crimes in Gaza. The group also alleged that B'nai Brith and Canadian Jewish Congress have tried "to silence criticism of Israel" on university campuses and in unions, and that Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney and Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff "unquestioningly echo" their views.

WORLD

Mason Defends Word

NEW YORK — Jackie Mason called U.S. President Barack Obama a "schvartze" during a performance in New York City, angering some audience members. The website TMZ reported March 15 that Mason used the term, which means "black" in Yiddish but is considered derogatory by some, during a show at Feinstein's at Loews Regency on March 12. "I'm an old Jew. I was raised in a Jewish family where 'schvartze' was used," Mason told TMZ. "It's not a demeaning word and I'm not going to defend myself."

Grants For Education

SAN FRANCISCO — A San Francisco foundation will provide millions of dollars in emergency grants for Jewish education in response to the recession. The Jim Joseph Foundation said last week that it would provide Jewish federations in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, Washington, Boston and Boston's North Shore with funding for need-based scholarships and subsidies for children attending Jewish schools and summer camps over the next two years. The money will be distributed through local federations. "These grants are meant to make the difference between kids being able to afford to go to Jewish school and camp, and not going," said Alvin Levitt, the foundation's president. In each year of the grant, the foundation will give Boston up to $2 million; San Francisco, up to $1.75 million; Los Angeles and Washington up to $1.25 million; and Boston's North Shore, up to $250,000.

Rescue Plan In Peril

NEW YORK — Jewish aid officials are worried that a secret operation to take imperiled Jews out of Yemen could be in jeopardy after news of the effort was made public in the Israeli press. In the weeks since a Yemenite Jew was murdered by a Muslim in the northern Yemen city of Raida, Jewish groups have sped up their efforts to get Yemen's 280 or so remaining Jews out of the country, where anti-Jewish hostility appears to be on the rise after Israel's war in Gaza. So far, Yemen's president has taken several steps to protect Jews in his country. About three weeks ago, the Jewish Agency for Israel said it had brought 10 Jews to Israel, while the United Jewish Communities has been working secretly to arrange for 113 Yemenite Jews to come to the United States. The operation was a joint effort of the Satmar community of Rockland County, N.Y., as well as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, UJA-Federation of New York and the U.S. State Department.

Pistons Owner Dies

DETROIT—Bill Davidson, owner of the Detroit Pistons basketball team and a major philanthropist, died March 13 at his home near Detroit at age 86. Among his gifts, Davidson and his wife, Karen, gave $75 million in 2007 to build the Sarah Wetsman Davidson Tower at Hadassah Hospital-Ein Kerem in Jerusalem. Davidson, who was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2008, had owned the NBA team since 1974, and won three championships. He also owned the NHL's Tampa Bay Lightning.

Bail Hearing In 1980 Shul Bombing Case

OTTAWA — The second bail hearing for a Lebanese-Canadian man arrested last fall for his alleged role in a 1980 shul bombing in Paris that killed four continued Monday. Hassan Diab, 55, was seeking release pending an extradition hearing.

Diab was arrested in November 2008 at the request of French authorities in connection with the bombing of the Copernic Street synagogue bombing. France is seeking to extradite him to stand trial for murder, attempted murder and the destruction of property. French judges believe he bought the motorbike used in the attack, and that he prepared explosives and placed them in a bag attached to the motorbike.

He was denied bail in December, but an appeals court reversed that decision, saying Diab, who doesn't speak French, couldn't understand documents submitted by France as evidence, Agence France-Presse reported.

Diab has denied links to the radical Palestinian group that's believed to have carried out the attack, and said French authorities are looking for a different man with the same name. He maintains he was not in Paris at the time of the bombing. Before his arrest last November, Diab was a part-time sociology professor at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa.

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Kenney cuts funding to Arab group

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney is following through on a threat he made last month to strip the Canadian Arab Federation of federal funding coming from his office for programs aimed at settling immigrants.

Kenney had publicly mused about whether or not his department would renew the CAF's annual funding due to what he called its "promotion of anti-Semitism and terrorism."

He told the The CJN Feb. 26 that Canada "takes a zero-tolerance approach to expressions of anti-Semitism in the public square."

Last week, Kenney's office confirmed it will not renew its two contracts with the CAF – a $2-million program that supports the group's LINC (language instruction for newcomers to Canada) program, which ends this month, and another for $474,873 for a settlement program that runs until March 31, 2010.

CAF president Khaled Mouammar has said the non-renewal of funding will harm immigrants.

In a war of words last month, Mouammaraccused Kenney of being a "professional whore" for his vocal support of Israel.

Kenney shrugged off the remark, telling The CJN, "I've been called much worse by much better people."

Jason Kenney

He added: "But my point [in weighing whether to continue funding the CAF], is whether an organization … that distributes videos produced by Hamas and Islamic Jihad that glorifies terrorism [and] indoctrinates children into the cult of anti-Semitic hatred… is not an organization, in my opinion, that should be receiving taxpayer subsidies."

A March 19 report in the National Post said Kenney is calling for a review of all federal public service grants and the withdrawal of federal support from groups that advocate hatred or terrorism.

"I think there is a tendency to be a little bit naive in Canada. We're so self-congratulatory about the success of our model of pluralism and diversity that surely no one could really mean ill in Canada… We don't necessarily all subscribe to Canadian values, and we should be willing to recognize those that don't," Kenney told an audience at the University of Toronto last week.

Alykhan Velshi, a spokesperson with Kenney's department, confirmed to The CJN that Kenney had instructed his office to begin reviews for all its contracts.

When asked for a list of organizations the minister intended to review, Velshi said there was none yet.

"It's premature at this stage to name particular organizations, since the policy is to be applied generally, but I'm sure we're all familiar with the organizations that receive taxpayer support on the one hand while at the same time promoting anti-Semitism, hatred and terrorism," Velshi said.

"The minister has begun applying this criteria within his own department to organizations whose contribution agreements are up for renewal, buthe's also working with other ministers on creating a government-wide policy."

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Israeli analyst surveys bleak landscape

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Yossi Klein Halevi, a contributing editor to the New Republic magazine and a senior fellow at the Adelson Institute for Strategic Studies of the Shalem Center in Jerusalem, is a respected Israeli political analyst known for providing a passionately moderate viewpoint.

In "Fearful, divided and outraged," a feature-length essay in the March 14 Globe and Mail, Klein Halevi, surveying the prevailing mood in Israel, described his country as "fearful for its survival, ready to do whatever is necessary for its basic security, and outraged at much of the world's judgment against its attempts to defend itself."

Klein Halevi wrote: "For decades, Israeli governments of both left and right maintained a strategic doctrine aimed at thwarting the emergence of terror enclaves on its borders as an existential threat. But with the creation of a Hezbollah mini-state in southern Lebanon and a Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip, that doctrine has collapsed. Not since May 1967, when Arab armies massed on Israel's borders and Arab leaders boasted about the imminent destruction of the Jewish state, have Israelis been so anxious about the very survival of the country."

Klein Halevi emphasized the psychological impact of the thousands of missiles that have fallen on Israeli towns and cities in the north under Hezbollah fire in 2006, and under Hamas since 2005 in the south.

He also reminded readers of the disillusionment of Israelis who've seen peace efforts fail: "Israel offered a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital in 2000 and received in return five years of suicide bombings, the worst wave of terror in the country's history."

The result? "Increasingly, Israelis sense that there are no solutions to the country's security crisis. Peace efforts have failed… But military solutions are also elusive."

Still, Klein Halevi noted that "[i]n principle, most Israelis support a two-state solution – 70 per cent, according to a recent poll." But the lesson of the Gaza withdrawal has been too sobering. Israelis are not prepared to risk exposing their heartland to missiles in return for withdrawing unilaterally from the West Bank.

Klein Halevi drew attention to the core of the impasse: "For Israelis, the real obstacle to an agreement is the continuing refusal of the Palestinian leadership, and much of the Arab leadership generally, to accept the legitimacy of a Jewish state in any borders. Not even moderate Palestinian leaders such as [Palestinian Authority President] Mahmoud Abbas have told their people that the Jews are here to stay, that this land must be shared by two peoples. Instead, the Palestinian media – of Fatah as well as Hamas – continues to tell its people that the Jews are thieves and usurpers, and that eventually the entirety of the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River will belong to them."

Klein Halevi made no attempt to sugar-coat this bleak assessment. If anything, he warned that the current Egyptian effort to forge a Hamas-Fatah unity government might only result in the radicalization of Fatah.

No wonder many Mideast analysts caution that, in the near future, the most we can expect is conflict management, rather than conflict resolution.

* * *

Worth noting: in "Labels only obscure Mideast realities" (Toronto Star, March 10) Martin Regg Cohn pointed out some obvious hypocrisy emanating from campus groups targeting Israel.

"Amidst the sound and fury of Israeli Apartheid Week – denouncing Israel's attacks on Gaza while downplaying the rockets fired by Hamas militants – there was relative silence on campuses about last week's historic developments in Sudan, where the genocide in Darfur is in its sixth year," he wrote.

"Hamas, however, was anything but silent. Moussa Abu Marzouk, the second-in-command of Hamas, made a point of flying to Khartoum so he could stand by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir in his hour of need. Al-Bashir had just been indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes in Darfur, where more than 300,000 people have been slain and 2.7 million others displaced."

This hypocrisy was also exposed, in more detail, in the CJN's March 19 editorial, "The silent conscience of the anti-Israel activist." As the editorial made abundantly clear, the silence about Sudan's crimes encompassed the entire Arab world, including the Arab League which "has never once condemned or expressed disapproval of the al-Bashir government."

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

From the editor's desk…

is on page 15

SeeJN

THEY SHOOT, ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH SCORES

The Toronto furniture retailer Decorium hosted the Baycrest Foundation's annual ProAm hockey pre-tournament dinner gala and fundraiser earlier this month. This year's gala raised $37,538 for research into Alzheimer's disease. The ProAm runs from April 23 to 25 at the Canlan Ice Sports facility on the York University campus.

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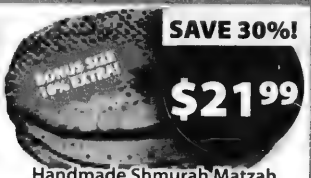
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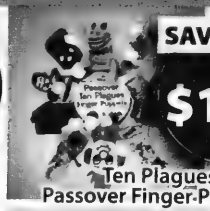
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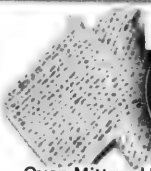
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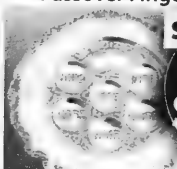
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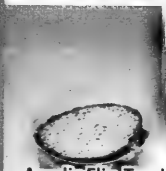
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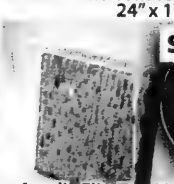
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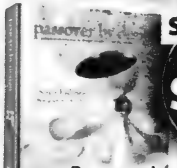
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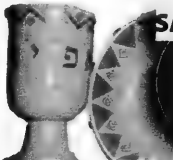
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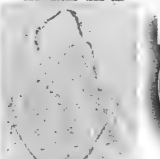
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Networking event aims to help people find work

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Two young Torontonians are planning an event that they hope will help people who have lost their jobs because of the economic downturn.

Moshe Grunfeld, a 22-year-old legal assistant, and his friend Choni Fried, a 27-year-old development officer for Chai Lifeline, are bringing ParnasaFest to Toronto this Sunday evening. The name is a reference to the Hebrew word for livelihood.

The grassroots networking event has already spread to 10 locations. It was launched last month in the United States by Dave Weinberg, a Toronto-born, Washington, D.C.-based friend of Grunfeld's and Fried's, in response to layoffs in the Jewish non-profit world.

Following a pilot event Feb. 11 in New York, ParnasaFests have been held in Chicago, Washington, Detroit, Jerusalem, Long Island, Sacramento, San Francisco and London, England.

After a second ParnasaFest was held in New York, Grunfeld said he heard that one person was hired as a result of a contact made at the first event, and that seven people received interviews.

"This is not a job fair," said Grunfeld. Much of it will consist of "shmoozing," and there will be an opportunity for attendees to introduce themselves by name and area of work.

As well, networking consultant Ida Shessel (letusfacilitate.com) will conduct an "interactive skill builder" to help participants network more effectively.

Shessel, who is donating her time for the event, said she hasn't heard of any similar events, aside from some smaller Jewish networking groups.

Because of a limited budget, ParnasaFest has been promoted mostly through Facebook and has been attracting a younger crowd, but the event is intended for everyone – "all ages, all career levels," Grunfeld said.

"We just want a good mix, because you never know who knows somebody who knows somebody... We're especially looking for people who are hiring, and for sponsors."

As of last week, Grunfeld and Fried had one sponsor, Saveutel, a company that provides cellular phone consulting services. They also have the venue, the Toronto Zionist Centre, courtesy of the Marlee Shul, a young Orthodox congregation that meets in the building.

Choni Fried, top, and Moshe Grunfeld

Although Grunfeld is employed, he spent several months last year looking for a job following his graduation from Yeshiva University. Eventually, he said, a Facebook contact who saw that he was job-hunting provided the lead he needed.

"You never know whose grandmother's aunt's cousin is going to be working at an accounting firm that happens to have a job, even if it's not an accounting job."

Fried said he and Grunfeld "immediately got on board" when they heard about the project. "For me, it was recognizing that if we can make a difference, it was incumbent on us to do something," Fried said.

Like Grunfeld, he also heard about his job through someone he knew. "I think if we can help people network, it's imperative that we do this."

He and Grunfeld advise job seekers to bring their business cards but not their resumes to ParnasaFest. The dress code is business casual. "There's no formality," said Fried.

"They should just bring themselves, and a willingness to shmooze and meet new people," Grunfeld added.

Fried said he would encourage prospective employers or people who know of a job opening to attend even for a short time. Organizers are asking people to pre-register.

ParnasaFest Toronto will be held this Sunday, March 29, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Zionist Centre, 788 Marlee Avenue. For further information or to pre-register, go to parnasafest.org and click on "Toronto."

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No isolation from this cause

It is by now a hard blow to the solar plexus of the supporters of Israel. Irrespective of the facts or the context or the history or the truth of the conflict with the Palestinian people and the Arab world, the Jewish state and all who believe in the justice of its cause increasingly fight for the favour of public opinion that is simply not there.

An article that appeared last week in the New York Times illustrates the dilemma. It was headlined "After Gaza, Israel Grapples with Crisis of Isolation." The reporter wrote that Israel "is facing its worst diplomatic crisis in two decades." The reason for this is the increasing hostility it faces in the world. It can expect more hostility, he suggests, if the country installs "a hawkish right-wing government." Israel's foreign ministry has undertaken a campaign to "improve Israel's image through cultural and information diplomacy." But the effort would be futile, the author suggests.

"Of course, for Israel's critics, including those who firmly support the existence of a Jewish state, the problem is not one of image but of policy. *They point to four decades of occupation; the settling of half a million Israel Jews on land captured in 1967; the economic strangling of Gaza for the past few years, and the society's growing indifference toward the creation of a Palestinian state as reasons Israel has lost favour abroad...*" (our emphasis).

Such critics of Israel point to this noose-like string of knotted allegations, but they never point at all to the Palestinians or their leaders. The Palestinians have firmly entrenched themselves in the minds of Israel's critics as the hapless, pitiful victims of Israel's very existence. Remove the sovereign Jewish existence, their leaders tell them, and the victimization will end.

For these critics of Israel, the history of the conflict began only in 1967. There are no pages in the book before June 1967. Yet they mysteriously ignore some of the most revealing post-67 pages: the accords of 1993; the Camp David frustrations of 2000; the suicide terror unleashed against Israel; the Gaza withdrawal of 2005, and the unremitting genocidal war, despite the withdrawal, directed at the Jewish state by the rulers in Gaza and their distant sponsors.

Israel's critics absolve Israel's enemies from even minimal standards of decent, humane behaviour. A "minor" example illustrates the point: that Gilad Schalit was kidnapped by the Gaza regime; that he has remained captive for more than 1,000 days; that his Hamas kidnappers have refused the Red Cross to ever visit him, and that they taunt and torture his family without even a whisper of condemnation from Israel's critics betrays the futility and the moral recklessness of Israel adopting policies merely to please those critics.

We buckle at times to catch our breath and we are weary, too, from the constant, unabating anti-Israel condemnations from both the highest and the lowest stations of the intelligentsia. But Israel's enemies and its critics need to know that, though weary, we will neither despair nor withdraw from constant, unabating support for Israel's cause. There will be no isolation from this just cause.

25 years ago in The CJN

U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Congressmen Tom Lantos and Benjamin Gilman introduced legislation to move the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Although they had support in both the House and the Senate, supporters of president Ronald Reagan opposed it, fearing it would hamper the country's role in the Mideast peace process.

Editorials & Letters

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Supplementary educational programs

The 30-plus supplementary programs throughout the Greater Toronto Area are concerned about the changes to Mercaz. While we have been assured that program grants from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto through the Mercaz will continue, the sudden loss of our Mercaz colleagues' experience and excellent consultative services, knowledge base and resources developed over many years will create great hardship for many of our schools and is likely to be detrimental to our educational community ("Federation downsizes Mercaz, cuts 10 jobs," CJN, March 12).

One of the unique and wonderful things about Jewish education in Toronto is that schools from across the denominational spectrum meet and work collaboratively, with everyone committed to providing the best possible Jewish education for their students. The future of continued educational collaboration is questionable without the support of a strong central agency for Jewish education.

In collaboration with the Mercaz, we have been developing a community standard for content, a work-in-progress that will be very difficult to continue to develop without outside professional support. Our staffing is far more limited than the day schools, and building capacity within the supplementary system is unlikely to be as effective or as efficient as what we were provided with by the Mercaz.

The loss of a central agency to work with us and the loss of the knowledge that the Mercaz staff has gained and shared with us will be difficult, if not impossible, to replace. We greatly appreciate the fine work of the Mercaz staff and are saddened by our sudden loss of their services and wisdom.

Karen L. Goodis
Chair, Supplementary Principals Council

* * *

Reducing Judaism to pithy statements

It seems to me that when a rabbi is asked to write a guest article for The CJN, he or she should write to as broad a constituency as possible.The message found in the column "Orthodoxy as heterodoxy" (Rabbinic Reflections, CJN, March 12) reads more as a polemic than anything else. The author strives to exclude any expression of Judaism that does not conform to his personal ideology.

The writer begins with strict descriptions of Shabbat observance, the nature of seating in the synagogue and the laws of family purity. Then, he becomes liberal on other matters of Jewish practice: women's roles, the State of Israel and Holocaust commemorations, concerning some of which his own colleagues may disagree.

While Shabbat observance, synagogue practices and family purity laws are essential, I am concerned when anyone tries to reduce Judaism to pithy statements. There are many axiomatic reduction examples of Judaism in our tradition. For example, "the world stands on three pillars – Torah, service and deeds of kindness"; or "justice, truth and peace." The Talmud poses four questions that we will be asked before entering paradise that deal with business ethics, raising a family, setting times for Torah learning and paving the way for a better future. I would caution anyone to reduce the vastness of Judaism to a litmus test of a few basic categories.

Rabbi Howard Morrison
Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue

* * *

JEWISH DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES
KRON
MY 5-YEAR OLD ALREADY TALKS A LOT...
...AT WHAT AGE WILL HE START WAVING HIS HANDS WHILE TALKING?

Toronto Partnership Minyan

As one of the individuals who is investing energy in establishing the Toronto Partnership Minyan (TPM), I would like to point out that the minyan is not egalitarian ("A partnership with potential," CJN, Feb. 19). TPM seeks to maximize women's participation in the observance of mitzvot, with a focus on synagogue service, within the confines of Orthodox Halachah.

While "women can read from the Torah, receive certain aliyot and lead various parts of the service," there is halachic limitation on the extent of their participation. The notion is one of partnership, rather than of egalitarianism, and supports and respects the values of our emerging and engaged community.

Marty Goldberg
Toronto

* * *

People search

I am trying to trace any family in Canada. My great-grandparents were Louis and Beccy Freedman, who came from Russia to Manchester, England, and had six children – one of whom immigrated to Canada before World War II. His name was Benny Freedman, but he may be known as Benny Freeman, and he had a son called Earl. Benny Freedman was born in Russia in 1891, his siblings were my Grandpa David, who was his elder brother by 10 years, then Eli, Gersh and Jane (Jinnie), and there was another brother. My dad was Hymie Freedman.

Lynda Werner
Manchester, England
email:
lynda_werner@hotmail.com

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Reflections on anti-Semitism

By DAVID H. GOLDBERG

Canadian Jews have every reason to feel concerned about some recent manifestations of anti-Semitism in this country. However, Canadian Jewry still enjoys much greater security with respect to anti-Semitism than do the Jews of Great Britain and continental Europe.

A February 2009 report by the European Union's Agency for Fundamental Rights provides a summary overview of manifestations of anti-Semitism in the EU between 2001 and 2008. The findings are disturbing, with increases in the number and severity of anti-Semitic incidents, and popular attitudes about Jews and the Jewish "race" in many European countries premised on pernicious stereotypes that have in some cases been likened to those of 1930s Europe.

A confluence of traditional and new forms of anti-Semitism is at play in modern European society. These include the following:

• ***Holocaust Denial*** More than 60 years after the end of World War II, denial of the Shoah remains an integral part of the European collective psyche. For example, in 2008, Spain's Constitutional Court ruled that Holocaust justification should be punishable by imprisonment, but Holocaust denial should not be, because the latter falls within the domain of "freedom of speech." Similarly, in Poland, a regional court halted criminal proceedings against the public use of the Nazi salute, based on the argument that the gesture could also be "an ancient Roman salute."

• ***'New Anti-Semitism'*** Left-wing European intelligentsia is the godfather of the new anti-Semitism. Having transformed Israel into what Liberal MP and former justice minister Irwin Cotler has called "the collective Jew among the nations," European liberals no longer discriminate against Jews as individuals. However, using language and symbols borrowed from traditional anti-Semitism, they attack Israel's legitimacy and discriminate against the Jewish people's right to live as an equal member of the family of nations. Moreover, their pseudo-intellectual rationalizations provide the justification for wild street demonstrations throughout Europe by anti-globalization activists and assorted other extreme left-wingers whose actual goal, again citing Cotler, is to make the world *Judenstaatrein*, "free of a Jewish state."

• ***'Disaffected Muslim Youth'*** According to the EU report, it is the "disaffected young Muslim," "person of North African origin," or "immigrant," who is viewed by many Europeans as the primary perpetrator of anti-Semitic incidents. A number of physical attacks on Jews in France and other European countries have been attributed to Muslims or North Africans. And anti-Israel street demonstrations calling for "death to Jews" and involving radicalized members of the local Arab and Muslim communities (and joined by militant left-wing and anti-globalization forces) often coincide with the outbreak of violence in the Middle East.

• ***The Extreme Right*** It has been the case historically that European right-wing extremists have responded to serious socio-economic upheaval by looking for a convenient scapegoat: the Jews. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that the current economic crisis affecting Europe has precipitated a discernible increase in xenophobic propaganda, as well as vandalism, harassment and physical assaults by "skinheads" targeting Jews. The situation is particularly serious in some of the former eastern bloc countries, although incidents also have occurred in western Europe and Great Britain. Extrapolating from European history, it can be anticipated that continued economic decline and unemployment will affect the scope of right-wing extremism targeting European Jewry.

There's no reason for Canadian Jews to assume that this country is immune to these trends and that the traditional and new forms of anti-Semitism currently threatening to erode Europe's soul (for the second time in less than a century) cannot infect Canadian society as well. In fact, elements of this illness are already readily apparent and festering.

However, what distinguishes the Canadian case from that of the European Union is the pace with which the political leadership is moving to prevent the illness from spreading.

Whereas European leaders have reacted to rising rates of anti-Semitism, Canada's leaders are taking pro-active and preventative measures, to make clear to anti-Semites (and all racists) that their hateful behaviour will not be tolerated in this country.

Prime Minister Steven Harper recently declared that anti-Semitism "is a pernicious evil that must be exposed, that must be confronted, that must be repudiated, whenever and wherever it appears. Fuelled by lies and paranoia we have learned from history it is an evil so profound... that is it ultimately a threat to us all."

A statement of such profound moral clarity should help make Canadian Jews feel confident about their status as Jews and as citizens of Canada.

David H. Goldberg is an independent policy analyst writing on issues affecting Israel and the Jewish people.

By JAMES MORTON

In Jerusalem a few years ago, I re-read Theodor Herzl's The Jewish State (1896). Herzl was not a religious man and his early views were that Jews would simply integrate into modern societies as another religious group. But the experience of the anti-Semitic Dreyfus trial in France convinced Herzl that Jews would never be accepted unless they had a state of their own. Once there was a state, Jews would be just another group and accepted in the same way as, say, the Portuguese.

Herzl's solution was dramatic and simple: let the sovereignty be granted us over a portion of the globe large enough to satisfy the rightful requirements of a nation. The rest we shall manage for ourselves.

And so, after two world wars and years of struggle, modern Israel was formed. The foundation has been a success – there is a Jewish state. Overt anti-Semitism is not widely accepted in western countries today (other parts of the world are not so tolerant), but attacks on the legitimacy or very existence of Herzl's state are common enough, and indeed are getting more common day by day. And, if we're being honest, we can admit that such attacks are usually just thinly veiled anti-Semitism.

A poster typically seen during Israel "Apartheid" Week

If I mention to colleagues that I'm taking a trip to, say, Greece, they make polite noises about sunshine and food. But mentioning a trip to Israel – a similar country in a similar part of the world – and there is a pause, followed by anything from a quick change of subject to assurances that the listener believes in peace and one God for all people, to open hostility and anger.

Israel is not a nation like any other.

So how should we describe this phenomenon? Is it nothing more than anti-Semitism in disguise?

In fairness, one must admit that not all criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic. It's fair to disagree with Israeli policy on, say, the integration of its Druze citizens without being anti-Semitic. As Thomas Friedman of the New York Times has written, "Criticizing Israel is not anti-Semitic, and saying so is vile. But singling out Israel for opprobrium and international sanction – out of all proportion to any other party in the Middle East – is anti-Semitic, and not saying so is dishonest." As columnist and TV host Michael Coren has cleverly put it, not all criticism of Israel indicates anti-Semitism, but all anti-Semites criticize Israel.

The sad truth is that attacks on Israel have become little more than a smokescreen for attacks on Jews. Because modern western countries have social and legal obstacles that prevent the expression of anti-Semitism in its traditional form, prejudice toward Jews is now likely to be expressed through attacks on Israel. As a result, some bigots have embraced the anti-Israel cause as a way of making a statement about their attitude toward Jews. Suggestions that Israel's foundation was a tragedy or that Israel is merely colonialism in action mirror earlier attempts to call Zionism racist.

Canadian parliamentarians have recognized this.

Federal Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff has said that criticism of Israel is legitimate, but attempting to describe Israel's very existence as a crime against humanity is not.

Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney notes that Canadians are free to express different views about the policies of a foreign government, but the annual campus event called Israeli Apartheid Week is not about that. It's about a systematic effort to delegitimize the democratic homeland of the Jewish people, a country born out of the Holocaust. He says he finds the resurgence of the old slander that Zionism is racism to be very troubling.

Much criticism of Israel is merely thinly disguised anti-Semitism. Harvard University law professor Alan Dershowitz has set out some factors that indicate when a a particular criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic. Some of them include:

• Characterizing Israel as "the worst," when it's clear that this is not an accurate comparative assessment.

• Discriminating against individuals only because they are Jewish Israelis, without regard to their individual views or actions.

• Physically or verbally attacking Jewish institutions, such as synagogues or cemeteries, as a means of protesting against Israel.

• Discriminating only against Israel in its attempts to qualify for certain positions or status internationally, such as obtaining a seat on the United Nations Security Council or the International Court of Justice, or joining the International Red Cross.

In the United Kingdom, a place where Jews have long been safe and welcome, anti-Israel attacks have been expressly directed at Jews, making the anti-Semitic nature of the attacks clear. Jewish-owned businesses are subject to harassment.

In London, Starbucks – whose chairman, Howard Schultz, is Jewish – has been firebombed in allegedly anti-Israel attacks that are in fact merely anti-Semitic. A grocery delivery van owned by a Jewish firm was attacked by a gang of youths claiming to be protesting Israeli policy. The driver – surely no agent of Israel – was hospitalized with head injuries. Similarly, a Tesco supermarket was targeted, its windows smashed and "Kill Jews" daubed on the walls in paint. (The Tesco supermarket chain was founded by a Jewish immigrant to Britain.)

Here in Canada, recent incidents on university campuses, while not as violent, have shown the same tendency to attack Jews as Jews under the guise of attacking Israel. The conflation of anti-Israel with anti-Semitic is very clear.

There can be little room for doubt: the truth is that most attacks on Israel, and all attacks on Israel's existence, are anti-Semitic.

James Morton is a lawyer in Toronto.

Reviving the living

Too often, life gets buried under the details of living. The demands of daily life produce empty, pedestrian lives. Perhaps Thoreau put it best when he said, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." Much like caged gerbils running in the wheel, we run busily onward on the road to nowhere. And life squeaks along as we run from e-mail to errand to carpool to shopping list.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

But details aren't the villain here. Someone needs to take out the garbage and change the baby's diapers. We need to tend to our basic needs, but we shouldn't get lost in them.

Humans are hard-wired to get lost in the here and now. We buy more groceries if we shop when we're hungry, and we drive more recklessly when we're late for an appointment. Parents at a bar mitzvah can be so distracted with making everything run properly that they neglect to savour the celebration. We're detail-oriented managers, and so we lose ourselves in minutiae, never to peer beyond and see the larger picture.

In chassidic thought, there are two stages of consciousness: "greatness" (gadlut) and "smallness" (katnut). In "smallness," we tend to the day to day. However, trivialities can narrow the spirit. True service of God occurs only in "greatness," when man focuses on the bigger picture.

Grasping the bigger picture is easier said than done. As the renowned Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk remarked, "I could revive the dead. I have much more difficulty reviving the living."

How do you revive the living? Well, it begins with just a few moments every day.

For example, how often do we appreciate everything we have? Even before I open my eyes in the morning, I tend to focus on all the tasks of the coming day, and in the process, my heart gets covered in a thick coating of "smallness," lacking appreciation for the blessing of a renewed life.

But there's a better way. It's customary to recite a short prayer called Modeh Ani immediately after waking up. The prayer says: "I offer thanks before you, living and eternal King, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great."

To achieve "greatness," we begin the new day with an appreciation for life. Recently, a Holocaust survivor remarked to me that after the experiences of Auschwitz "every day is gift." And this is true of everyone, whether or not we have endured a near-death experience. Every day is a blessing.

With Modeh Ani, you can touch "greatness" and, for a few short moments, revive the living.

Canada takes lead in fighting anti-Semitism

Canada is leading impressively in fighting modern anti-Jewish bigotry, even when it's camouflaged as criticism of Israel. The minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism, Jason Kenney, has defined today's obscenely trendy form of anti-Semitism as "predicated on the notion that the Jews alone have no right to a homeland, the anti-Zionist version of anti-Semitism." Even though many Canadian campuses are polluted by systematic anti-Israel bias and most western countries are passive, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government is building Canada's reputation for defending human rights. As well, Liberal party leaders such as Irwin Cotler, Bob Rae, and Michael Ignatieff have demonstrated that Canadians' commitment to fighting Jew-hatred is bipartisan.

Gil Troy in Montreal

Canada has distinguished itself by being the first country to boycott the upcoming "Durban II" meeting in Geneva. In 2001, anti-Israel forces turned its predecessor – the United Nations' conference against racism, held in Durban, South Africa – into an anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist hate-fest. Next month, the world's human rights abusers who bash Israel to cover their own sins are preparing a repeat. Canada will not join this outrage. At the recent Inter-Parliamentary Forum against Anti-Semitism in London, co-chaired by Cotler, the distinguished Canadian jurist and MP, Kenney mocked his European colleagues for dithering, saying, "I always thought Europe prided itself as having its own independent foreign policy aligned with its own values and interests."

Addressing the conference, Kenney singled out both the Canadian Islamic Congress and the Canadian Arab Federation (CAF) for fomenting anti-Semitism. Leaders of the CAF have circulated hostile e-mails demonizing Rae because of his wife's Jewish communal activism, and its president recently called Kenney a "professional whore" for Israel when he denounced supposed "peace" rallies that championed Hezbollah and Hamas terrorists. Ottawa cut nearly $500,000 in grants to the CAF, showing that an organization that insults Canadian leaders and demonizes fellow Canadians should not enjoy Canadian largesse.

In that same spirit, Ignatieff, the Liberal leader, denounced the week devoted to linking democratic Israel to the racist, apartheid regime that terrorized South Africans (repeating the week's name furthers the unholy attempt to link Israel and that evil). Boldly criticizing union forces in CUPE and elsewhere who perpetuate these lies, Ignatieff wrote that such a week on campuses "betrays the values of mutual respect that Canada has always promoted." This big lie moves beyond legitimate criticism to demonization, Ignatieff explained, because "international law defines 'apartheid' as a crime against humanity," so the false equation is an attempt "to undermine the legitimacy of the Jewish state itself."

In London last month, Kenney announced that he "would be delighted to host the next conference of the inter-parliamentary commission in Canada." Next year, Canada will showcase its best practices in fighting anti-Semitism to the world.

As the parliamentarians monitor their progress in fighting this scourge, the parallel "experts forum" should reconvene, tapping into North American expertise in building positive group identity and fighting bigotry. Harper could talk about how his government has chosen to be a proactive force in fighting anti-Semitism. McGill University political philosopher Charles Taylor could speak about multiculturalism and modern identity-building. Cotler could speak about Canada's contribution to the UN Human Rights Declaration and the fight against genocide. South African refugees could describe apartheid's true nature and explain how false analogies minimize the systematic racism that South Africans endured.

Ottawa police officials could describe their unique community outreach efforts in fighting bigotry. Leaders of different faith communities could discuss their own struggles against prejudice and how they co-operate to achieve social harmony. Canadian Jewish leaders could describe how they foster a rich Jewish identity while fighting bigotry and contributing to the broader community. Bringing these kinds of local insights would enhance the discussions that took place this year in London on fighting Internet hate, stopping systematic demonization, changing the dynamics on campus and cataloguing hate crimes.

Ideally, by next year, such a conference will be unnecessary. But as long as it's needed to combat discrimination, leaders such as Harper and his bipartisan colleagues should be hailed for refusing to stay silent amid this new outbreak of an ancient, but persistent, plague.

And now for the good news...

Several years ago, just before he began training as an officer in the Israeli navy, my nephew Yoni visited us in Canada for the first time. He grew up in Be'er Sheva, in the heart of the Negev desert, so our tourism with him focused on water sites: Niagara Falls, the Toronto Islands, the Beaches. My husband even took him on a whirlwind canoeing circuit in Algonquin Park – seven lakes in one day. But wherever we took him, the trip home always occasioned the same comment.

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

We live near a major intersection in Toronto that sports a giant advertising billboard atop a lowrise commercial property. For several years running, the billboard always carried fundraising ads for a philanthropic organization. During Yoni's visit, the ad on the billboard featured photos of several frowning people with sad, imploring eyes, mostly children. I no longer recall the precise caption, but it read something like "Israel: They need your help." Each time we passed it, Yoni's annoyance increased. As an Israeli, he felt the billboard poster diminished him, depicting him as needy, dependent and unresourceful, reliant upon the charity of others. He called it the yisraelim miskenim poster – the poor Israelis poster.

The billboard and those who commissioned it meant Yoni and his countrymen no unkindness. On the contrary, its goal was to inspire kindness, to support projects that would benefit Israel and its inhabitants. And Yoni, of course, was not its intended audience.

But the poster's designers understood that bad news sells. It sells newspapers. It elects political candidates. It sells organizations. It promotes group cohesion. It has the power to unsettle us, fascinate us, make us anxious, rock us from our complacency and mobilize us to action. In fact, to our credit, when we hear bad news, most of us want to do something about it.

But bad news can be too good a tool for mobilization, whether for political action, fundraising or identity affirmation. And, in the imperfect world we inhabit, there's always something alarming going on for us to glom onto and enlist to our cause.

But there's a price for utilizing this powerful tool. The short-term gains may be great, but long term, it costs us. Take anti-Semitism, for example. A touch of anti-Semitism in the air, I have heard it argued, is "good for the Jews," because the feeling of beleaguerment strengthens the sense of Jewish identity. Indeed, Jean Paul Sartre observed in the mid-1940s that Jews will remain Jews so long as hatred against them persists. Because of the anxieties it stirs, our concern with anti-Semitism can be exploited.

I'm not suggesting that we should not name anti-Semitism when and where we see it, and work against it. Indeed, as I have argued previously in these pages, the "oldest hatred" endures in our times. Its deadliest manifestation is still in living memory of our community, and we must treat it as a real threat.

But sometimes I feel that the issue of anti-Semitism takes over our channels of thought and communication, so much so, that we forget to emphasize that – pace Sartre – Jews remain Jews not because others denigrate us, but because Judaism and Jewish culture is a source of spiritual and ethical values, a rich font of texts, culture, and history that inspire and challenge.

While bad news has the power to rally us, putting it at the centre of our religious, cultural or organizational lives can stunt us as a community. We need to celebrate our accomplishments, whether in education, culture, science, community building or helping ourselves and helping others. Affirmation, not fear, should lead our Jewish commitments. Not anxiety, but joy.

Having fulfilled his commitment as a naval officer, Yoni will be visiting us again this spring. Last time I checked, the billboard nearby carried an ad for women's clothing.

The coast is clear.

It's time for some good news.

The Kirshner File

Israel marks 30 years of formal peace with Egypt

Israel's historic peace treaty with Egypt, signed and sealed 30 years ago this week in Washington, D.C., has weathered a succession of storms, yet it remains a cold peace.

Egypt's bold, trail-blazing decision to establish formal diplomatic relations with the Jewish state after three decades of mutual hostility and four wars was preceded by secret Israeli-Egyptian talks, the unprecedented visit to Israel of Egypt's president, Anwar Sadat, in November 1977, and the signing of the Camp David accords – which created a framework for peace – in September 1978.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

On March 26, 1979, Sadat and Israel's prime minister, Menachem Begin, affixed their signatures to the treaty, which both sides needed to develop their respective economies. The master of ceremonies was the president of the United States, Jimmy Carter, who had worked tirelessly to make it happen. Sadat, keen to resolve the Palestinian question, declared he had not signed a separate peace with Israel. But this was the real meaning of Egypt's treaty with Israel.

In short order, Israel and Egypt set up embassies in Cairo and Tel Aviv. Egypt thus became the first Arab country to recognize Israel. By 1981, the international force that was to monitor the provisions of the treaty – the Multinational Force and Observers – was up and running in the Sinai Peninsula, which Israel had captured, for the third time, in the Six Day War.

Regarded as a harbinger of peace in the Middle East, but roundly denounced by the PLO, Iran and such Arab states as Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, the treaty left Egypt – the pre-eminent Arab power – virtually isolated in the Muslim world for some years to come.

The treaty has benefited both sides.

Although Israel gave up territorial depth for the sake of peace, it removed Egypt as a potential military threat. Egypt, which fought wars with Israel in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973, has been neutralized as an enemy. Yet the majority of Egyptians are still hostile to Israel and regard it as a usurper of Palestinian rights, while Islamic fundamentalists have called for the cancellation of the treaty. For Israel, the treaty was a landmark, breaking its isolation in the Arab world and opening the road for its rapprochement with the PLO in 1993 and Jordan in 1994.

By making peace with Israel, Egypt retrieved the Sinai Peninsula, a vast, pristine wilderness brimming with oil and gas fields and tourist potential. Egypt was also able to channel scarce resources to nation building and reestablish ties with the United States, all at the expense of the old Soviet Union. By forming something of an alliance with Washington, Egypt made itself eligible for U.S. aid packages, totalling almost $2 billion per year, and the latest American weaponry to modernize its armed forces.

The treaty has endured despite a series of crises: Sadat's assassination in 1981 at the hands of Muslim radicals, the formation of a new government headed by Hosni Mubarak, Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Palestinian uprisings in 1987 and 2000, the Second Lebanon War in 2006 and, most recently, Israel's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Two of these events prompted Egypt to recall its ambassador in Israel. Saad Mortada, Egypt's first envoy, was recalled in 1982 in protest over the Sabra and Shatila massacre in Beirut. He did not return. His successor, Mohammed Bassiouny, Egypt's longest-serving ambassador to Israel, was ordered home shortly after the eruption of the second intifadah in 2000. Four years passed before a replacement, Assem Ibrahim, presented his credentials in Israel.

During the war in Gaza, Mubarak was pressured to recall Ibrahim. Mubarak kept Ibrahim in Tel Aviv, having accused Hamas of igniting the war by breaking the ceasefire that Egypt had painstakingly arranged six months earlier, and is now trying to resurrect.

Despite its mercurial relationship with Egypt, Israel regards the treaty as a strategic prize to be nurtured and honed.

Apart from its geo-political dimensions, the treaty has been mutually advantageous in commercial terms.

Israel's economic relations with Egypt rest on two pillars – the sale of Egyptian natural gas to Israel and the presence of Qualifying Industrial Zones in Egypt. (In the past, Israel has also bought oil from Egypt).

In 2005, in a $2.5-billion deal, Israel agreed to buy 1.7 billion cubic metres of natural gas from Egypt over 15 years.

Egyptian nationalists and Islamists tried to torpedo the deal, claiming that Egypt was selling its gas too cheaply. A lower court halted the flow, but last month, a higher court suspended that ruling.

Five years ago, Israel and Egypt signed a trade agreement, brokered by Washington, establishing Qualified Industrial Zones in Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said. Under the pact, Egypt may export clothes and textiles, its chief exports, to the United States on a duty-free basis as long as they contain Israeli manufactured segments.

The agreement has created at least 15,000 jobs in Egypt, no small feat for a poverty-stricken Third World nation that suffers from chronic unemployment and underemployment.

Egyptian president Anwar Sadat and Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin exchange views during Sadat's first visit to Israel in 1977 [I.P.P.A. photo]

Egypt reaps profit from the unsullied beauty of the Sinai, thanks to the Israelis who vacation there in droves, in contrast to the minuscule number of Egyptians who visit Israel.

Islamic terrorists, aided by Bedouins, bombed hotels in Taba and Sharm el-Sheikh in 2004 and 2005, killing and wounding scores of western and Israeli tourists. These incidents have scared off some travellers, but the Sinai is still a big draw.

Israel's expertise in agriculture, particularly in arid area farming, has been useful to the Egyptians. Israel has built experimental farms in Egypt, helping Egyptian farmers increase their crop yield.

This level of co-operation and normalization has been sorely lacking in professional, political and cultural exchanges, which are practically non-existent.

Examples abound.

The Egyptian government blocked Ali Salem, one of Egypt's most eminent playwrights, from personally accepting an honorary degree from Ben-Gurion University. Amr Waked, an Egyptian actor, was reprimanded by the actors' union for appearing in a U.S. miniseries opposite an Israeli actor.

In 2004, a Cairo judge banned the formation of an Egyptian-Israeli friendship society. In the same year, the speaker of Egypt's parliament rejected an Israeli invitation to address the Knesset to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the peace treaty. Last year, opposition politicians protested when the Israeli ambassador suggested that Hebrew be added to the list of foreign languages in the Egyptian school curriculum. Meanwhile, several members of parliament campaigned to stop an annual Israeli pilgrimage to the grave of a famous Moroccan-born rabbi buried north of Cairo.

The Egyptian media, both state-owned and private, have regularly carried anti-Israel and anti-Semitic content, bashing Israel for its settlement policies in the West Bank and its treatment of the Palestinians. Egyptian school texts have defamed Israel and Jews. In 2002, Egyptian state television broadcast an inflammatory series, Horseman without a Horse, adapted from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Keenly aware of anti-Israel currents, Mubarak has never visited Israel, except for a three-hour trip in 1995 to attend prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's funeral.

Anti-Israel feeling has also been whipped by Israeli reports that 250 Egyptian prisoners of war were shot during the Six Day War, by the convictions of Egyptians accused of spying for Israel and by Israel's refusal to give up its nuclear arsenal and sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Despite the acrimony, Israel and Egypt are committed to preserving the treaty, realizing that its abrogation would serve no one's interest and could be destabilizing. Three decades ago, the Middle East turned a corner when Israel and Egypt made peace, but Israel must surely wonder whether the Arabs will ever produce another figure like Sadat.

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Rabbi leads multifaith vigil at Queen's Park

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

For some, St. Patrick's Day was a time for revelry. But for a faithful few under a tent on the lawn of Queen's Park at noon on March 17, it was an opportunity to remind Ontario MPPs that their impending budget should not forsake the province's homeless, impoverished and malnourished.

It was a message delivered as part of a month-long prayer vigil outside the legislature, organized by the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC). The vigil, which began March 3, ends today (March 26) with the reading of the provincial budget. The vigil was officiated each day by a leader of one of the participating faith communities.

Last week, it was Congregation Darchei Noam's Rabbi Tina Grimberg's turn. She led nearly 50 members of her congregation and other ISARC supporters through an hour-long service of prayer and quotes derived from a range of Jewish sources addressing the need for tikkun olam and tzedakah. Her message included passages from writings in the Torah, Talmud and learned Jewish scholars and rabbis from throughout the ages.

Speaking to The CJN just prior to her homily, Rabbi Grimberg recalled her youth living in Soviet-era Russia, saying that although there were many problems with Communism's "follies," one thing that the government did right was ensure that every person had a fixed address.

"Certainly, [in North America] we have democracy, free economy, the ability to earn… but our inability to sustain those in need is a *bushah* – in Hebrew this means a shame," she said. "At the level of civilization in which we live, this should be eradicated. A roof over one's head is not a privilege, it's a right."

Rabbi Tina Grimberg leads a prayer service at Queen's Park last week. [Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf photo]

Rabbi Grimberg said she remembered her father telling her that he was part of a volunteer group that made the rounds each winter night to take "drunks" back to their homes.

"Yes, they sometimes shared a stove or [facilities] with 10 or 12 others in a building. Still, they had somewhere to go. Here, there are people who are still literally freezing to death on the street."

Rabbi Grimberg said she believed the vigil would have an impact regardless of whether MPPs inside Queen's Park consider themselves religious or not.

"How can [the vigil] not have an effect if there are dedicated, caring people praying in a loving way, asking that the [topic] of our most vulnerable in society be brought up to our lawmakers?" she asked.

She added: "Even if this doesn't work [directly on the MPPs], we will still defy. Those who pass by and see us… we don't know how many people we touch when we do goodness in this world. I refuse to believe that we don't do good here. This is a mitzvah."

Ryerson University political science professor Myer Siemiatycki, chair of Darchei Noam's social justice advocacy committee, said he saw the "call for social justice as central to our understanding of Judaism."

Members of the First Narayever Congregation on Brunswick Avenue were scheduled to attend the vigil on Tuesday (March 24), when the shul's spiritual leader, Rabbi Ed Elkin, was slated to lead it.

Also on hand at last week's vigil was Susan Eagle, chair of ISARC and a United Church pastor in London, Ont.

Rev. Eagle said the vigil represented "a witness and a presence" that "unites us in the care and concern of our neighbour."

She said this latest provincial budget is "critical," adding that ISARC members were "praying to strengthen the resolve of our elected leaders to understand how serious this budget is."

Although MPPs did not officially respond to the vigil, Rev. Eagle said she noticed a few who "wandered out" to thank participants.

The closing ceremony for the vigil will include the lighting of candles for each MPP, and each legislator will be presented with one as "a reminder we've been offering prayers for them," Rev. Eagle said.

Participating faith leaders will also take candles back to their houses of worship to remind their congregants that "although our vigil here is over… much more needs to be done. Because we're not naive enough to think that everything that needs to be done will be covered in this budget," she said.

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Israel has a bad electoral system: professor

Arye Naor

By RON CSILLAG
Special to The CJN

The people may have spoken but the politicians, it seems, cannot hear them.

More accurately, it is Israel's political system that is deaf.

"The people spoke more than a month ago but the prime minister-designate is still waiting outside the delivery room," Prof. Arye Naor observed in a recent talk at York University. "Why does it happen? Why does it happen again and again?"

The reason for Israel's perennial political paralysis, Naor bluntly put it, is "a very bad electoral system."

A professor of public policy and administration at Ben-Gurion University, Naor is visiting professor of Israel studies at York. His talk was the inaugural lecture in the Israel studies program, part of York's Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies.

In most parliamentary democracies, the prime minister is the leader of the party that receives the most seats in the legislature. But that didn't happen in the Feb. 10 Israeli election, in which Tzipi Livni's Kadima party won 28 seats to 27 for Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party. Netanyahu was chosen to form a government because a majority of members of the Knesset said they favoured him over Livni.

Naor blames a "multiplicity of parties" for the mess. Israel employs an electoral system called party-list proportional representation, based on the strength of political parties across the spectrum. In the last election, 33 parties vied for 120 seats. Twelve of them actually won seats thanks to a rule that a party needs at least two per cent of the popular vote to win a seat.

With that kind of patchwork, it's little wonder that every government in Israel's history has been a coalition, said Naor, who served as cabinet secretary to former prime minister Menachem Begin. As a result, Israel is in "permanent crisis" politically.

"It leads to government dysfunction. It is very difficult to function properly when the decision-making group is divided from the inside and competing all the time with each other."

Major decisions surrounding the peace process and national budgets often suffer as a result, he said. "It's impossible to run a country under these circumstances."

Compromise is "usually the worst solution because it is 'neither nor.'" But political compromise may be the only solution, and it would "find the necessary compromise inside parts of Israeli society."

While radical change in Israel "is out of the question," Naor recalled two old reformist ideas. One, formulated by the country's founding fathers, suggested dividing Israel into 120 "constituencies," similar to the British riding system. The plan was rejected by founding prime minister David Ben-Gurion's own party.

Another is fashioned on a German model. It would divide Israel into 30 or so electoral regions, each choosing three or four members of the Knesset. "That's been under discussion for 40 years," Naor said.

A third is to turn Israel into a republic that elects a president via direct popular vote. Another, and more realistic approach, is to allow the leader of the party with the most seats to begin acting as prime minister right away, which would put pressure on other parties to enter a coalition quickly.

Like other pundits, Naor predicted that Netanyahu will cobble together a narrow right-wing unity government.

The controversial Avigdor Lieberman, leader of the rightist Yisrael Beiteinu party, which won 15 seats in the election, the third-highest total, was designated as foreign minister last week in a coalition agreement with Netanyahu.

Naor said Netanyahu's "real difficulties will begin" when he forms a coalition, tries to balance cabinet posts among his partners, and may have to sacrifice his policies. "When politics and policies collide, you know which one prevails," Naor said, noting that it was Netanyahu who, as a hardline former prime minister, ceded the West Bank town of Hebron to the Palestinians.

But as a young nation, Israel "is a society and a country still in the making."

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Israel targets 'sophisticated travellers' in 2009

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Coming off of one of its most successful tourism years on record, Israel is launching a new ad campaign aimed at more affluent travellers, and it's expanding its marketing reach in Canada by striking deals with travel agents who serve communities that have rarely thought of the Holy Land as a destination.

On a visit to Toronto's Israel Government Tourism Office (IGTO) last week from New York, Arie Sommer, Israel's tourism commissioner for North and South America, outlined to the media some of the strategies that Israel is using to build on the success of its 2008 campaign.

"We've set a goal to bring 1,000,000 North American tourists to Israel in 2012," Sommer said, adding that last year, Israel attracted 3,000,000 tourists from around the world. Of those, approximately 700,000 were from North America, including 70,000 Canadians.

He said Israeli tourism officials had forecast an "even better" year in 2009, but the war in Gaza and the global economic downturn have dampened expectations. Now, Sommer said he'd consider the year a success if there was only a 20 per cent drop in tourism this year.

Sommer stressed that while he continues to value traditional Jewish and Christian travellers, he said it's time for Israel to become a "real tourist destination" and go after the "sophisticated traveller" market.

He described the latter as people who have more disposable income and who like to spontaneously visit destinations for pleasure, not necessarily for religious reasons.

Arie Sommer

"We believe we can divert these travelers and their families... to Israel" instead of going to Europe and Asia, he said. "Israel must increase its share of these travellers."

Reporters were shown a series of 2009 TV commercial spots and poster ads put together by Israel's tourism ministry as part of a campaign that cost $4.5 million.

Titled "You'll love Israel from the first 'Shalom'" and "Israel: No One Belongs Here More Than You," the various TV ads range from one focusing on a young couple making their first visit to the Holy Land and being greeted with robust "Shaloms" by smiling Israelis to one featuring a family exploring Israel's many wonders together.

Sommer also spoke at length about how the Canadian market is expanding due to recent, local public relations campaigns that paint Israel in a new light as a safe and fun travel destination.

He said Israel's tourism offices have been working hard to "bring in new wholesalers" to sell Israel to Canada's Chinese and Indian communities, among others.

"For years, we neglected our retail travel agents because we worked [primarily] with the Jewish and Christian communities. But we realized we're lacking the sales force to sell Israel," Sommer said. "We're now conducting seminars with travel agents [representing various ethnic communities], and I think gradually these agents are realizing it's worthwhile to sell Israel as a travel destination."

Oded Grofman, director of the IGTO in Canada, said his office has heard from its new partner travel agents that "they're receiving more calls" from their communities regarding travel to Israel.

In addition to promoting celebrations of Tel Aviv's 100th anniversary this year, Sommer said his office is also planning to use the Pope's upcoming trip to Israel in May to drum up more interest in the country among Catholics.

"Unfortunately, we don't see too many Catholics visiting Israel. They prefer [travelling to] the Vatican," he said jokingly.

On another front, Sommer said Israel has also increased its trips for journalists to Israel in order to increase the country's positive exposure in the worldwide media.

"We have hundreds of journalists visit each year," he said.

According to the IGTO, 25 Canadian journalists have travelled to Israel already this year.

Sommer said that many major travel publications are enquiring about Israel, and he noted that enRoute, Air Canada's in-flight magazine, is looking into a piece about Israel for publication in the near future.

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New Haggadot arrivals

From the editor's desk...

No festival in our calendar more firmly anchors in us a collective sense of memory and inter-connection than Pesach.

This is how it has been ever since Moses imparted God's directions for the very first Pesach night rituals to the soon-to-be-freed slaves some 3,500 years ago and our beloved sage rabbis centuries later created and then enhanced the order of procedure (the seder) for retelling and re-enacting that nervous, wonderful, historic first Passover night.

No religious work has been more illustrated, decorated or reproduced than the Haggadah, the liturgical text that enshrines that memory-sustaining and people defining seder.

As has become my custom on the "eve" of Pesach, I enjoy bringing to our readers' attention to some of the new Haggadot that come across my desk in time for the holiday.

* * *

The Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem has recently published two stunning Haggadot. A non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of pluralistic Jewish education in Israel and Europe, the institute is also associated with the Conservative movement.

The Lovell Haggadah is a testament to the soaring places that the human imagination can touch when the heart combines devotion to text with devotion to esthetics.

Rabbi Matthew Berkowitz of Boca Raton and Jerusalem is the illuminator, translator and commentator of this Haggadah. He is supremely talented. And we are the beneficiary of his talents.

Rabbi Berkowitz provides three distinct entry points to the mystery and wonder of the seder experience for the user of this Haggadah: the book's liturgy, its artwork and commentary. Each is its own magical pathway to new thoughts and reflections on our participation in the story of the Exodus.

The production values of the text are of a very high quality. The layout calls us to each page. The inter-relationships among space, illustration and text is pleasing and provocative. The cream colour and quality of the paper immediately set this Haggadah apart. Moreover, and perhaps especially, Berkowitz's drawings are bold and deeply evocative.

The Haggadah takes its name from the sponsors of Rabbi Berkowitz's project, Dedee and Stephen Lovell, who are his students and who provided the chief motivation for him to undertake this rare artistic achievement. The softcover work sits lightly and delightfully in the reader's hand.

The Schechter Haggadah is also a three-channelled exploration through art, history and commentary of the Haggadah.

Joshua Kulp, the co-founder of the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem, provides the translations and the commentaries in the Haggadah. David Golinkin, president and the Jerome and Miriam Katzin Professor of Jewish Law at the Schechter Institute, has selected and annotated the 115 eye-catching colour illustrations in the book.

A hardcover work of 350 pages, the Schechter Haggadah is a tall textbook conceived as a sourcebook and reference guide for the myriad aspects of enquiry into the origins, meanings and evolution of the many-layered text and rituals of the seder.

The text is cross-referenced throughout the Haggadah. The illustrations reach as far back as the year 1300 CE, and the commentary section is itself a banquet of some 40 different discussions and elaborations.

This Haggadah is both a comprehensive seminar into the entirety of the lore and instruction of the seder and a eye-catching travelogue back through time and space that our sages originally intended the seder to be for us and our children.

* * *

The JPS Commentary on the Haggadah, (The Jewish Publication Society Philadelphia) follows in the footsteps of all the JPS publications: serious and scholarly.

The actual text of the Haggadah seder, finely printed in clear, square Hebrew font, is accompanied by traditional, exegetical commentary.

But the magnet of this Haggadah attracting inquisitive minds and curious hearts is the 70-page introductory essay by renowned scholar Joseph Tabory, professor of Talmud at Bar-Ilan University in Israel and an Orthodox rabbi. The essay is titled The Haggadah and its Ritual. Its wide-ranging explorations are akin to a plunge into the middle of the lake of scholarship into the history of the Jewish people's attachment and relationship to this most seminal and beloved of sacred texts: the Haggadah. It is an excellent and exciting feeling.

* * *

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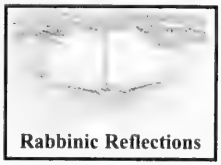
Jewish Life

Blessing the sun, blessing life

By RABBI AARON LEVY



I'm not a morning person, but on April 8, I'll actually be excited to wake up before dawn. Yes, it's the morning before Passover begins, and I'll still have a long to-do list of cleaning and cooking to purge our home of chametz and prepare for the seders, but that's not why I'll rise with alacrity. Rather, it's the once-in-a-generation opportunity to say Birkat Hachamah – the blessing of the sun – that has me enthused.

The Talmud quotes an earlier rabbinic source that teaches: "One who sees the sun in its season says: 'Blessed is the One Who makes creation – Baruch oseh bereishit.'" The timing of "in its season" is explained as being when the sun returns to the same position it held at the start of its existence, on the fourth day of creation, which re-occurs every 28 years on a Wednesday in the spring. (Mark Mietkiewicz referenced some websites that elaborate on the technical details behind this calculation in his Jewish Highway columns in the past two issues of The CJN.)

Later Jewish law specifies the full text of this blessing – "Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the universe, who makes the work of creation" – and that this blessing should be recited upon observing the sun at sunrise or soon thereafter, until noon at the latest. Over the centuries, a short service grew around the blessing to include poetic selections from the Torah, Prophets, Psalms, Talmud, and the siddur.

Admittedly, part of my eagerness for Birkat Hachamah derives from the mere obscurity and infrequency of this mitzvah. Although I'm traditionally observant and make many blessings each day, I've never performed this ritual before, and I won't be able to do so again for quite some time. However, the identical words are also prescribed for viewing scenes of exceptional natural beauty such as lightning, mountains and rivers. As an avid hiker and traveller, I have felt inspired by my surroundings to pronounce this same blessing many times before. So the overall experience of Birkat Hachamah will be new for me, but its central component, the blessing, will not.

My excitement about Birkat Hachamah really stems from something deeper than its novelty. It's the Jewish opportunity and obligation to recognize how reliant we are on the sun – and by extension, God – for everything we have on our planet. In lighting our world, the sun provides a steady rhythm in time upon which humanity plays our great variety of tunes.

In Genesis, God says, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate day from night; they shall serve as signs for the set times – the days and the years." It would be difficult to overstate the necessity of the sun. As science writer Oliver Morton recently put it in the New York Times, "An unending spate of pure luminous energy pours from the sun in all directions. Eight minutes downstream at the speed of light, part of this extraordinary flux crashes down on the Earth in a 170,000-trillion-watt torrent… It is this sunlight, endlessly refreshed, that allows the grass to grow, the birds to sing – and you to live."

Like all Jewish blessings, Birkat Hachamah can raise our consciousness of both the physical and the spiritual dimensions of life and sensitize us to the majesty of the natural world, which the Torah directs us to "serve and protect."

It'll be well worth waking up early to say Birkat Hachamah.

Rabbi Aaron Levy is organizing a new, grassroots, downtown Jewish community at the Kiever Synagogue in Toronto's Kensington Market.

Adding value to Pesach preparation

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

With Passover just around the corner, most of us are overwhelmed with our "to do" lists, guests lists, shopping lists, recipe lists and the piece of paper jammed into our pockets with our miscellaneous list. It's possible that only once we feel things are under control will we begin to remind ourselves that this is a holiday of freedom and was meant to be a celebration. Unfortunately, we usually feel things are under control just hours before the holiday begins.

When the preparation becomes more important than the holiday itself, we need to stop and ask ourselves very real questions about Jewish value and meaningfulness, and then infuse our preparations with these same values and meanings.

Many Jewish homes will gather their chametzdik goods and store them away securely out of sight. Some homeowners will sell their stored chametz by filling out a form with a Jewish institution, allowing a collective sale. Other homeowners may have non-Jewish friends that are familiar and comfortable taking part in a sale transaction for the food. Once Passover has ended, the sold goods revert back to their original owners and the chametz comes out of storage.

Much of the preparation for Passover is spent gathering all this chametz, finding the proper storage place and then stacking and securing all the foodstuffs. This is an ideal place in our preparations to have Jewish values inform the routine labour by introducing the value of tzedakah, charity.

Tzedakah is a large part of the Passover ritual. Near the beginning of our seders, we declare: "Anyone who is hungry should come and eat, anyone who needs [to participate in a seder] should come and celebrate Pesach with us." Our homes, doors and tables are ready and eager to welcome anyone in need. It makes perfect sense, since the holiday celebrates the change in destiny of those who were in most need to those who were most redeemed.

In fact, not only does it make perfect sense, but the very word for charity in Hebrew, tzedakah, doesn't actually mean charity, it means justice. It's not just that some people have more than they could ever use, while others don't have basic essentials. When we give tzedakah, we're contributing to justice in the world by attempting to strike a balance.

It has been widely practised in Jewish communities that when we're doing our Passover shopping, we pick up a few extra boxes of kosher-for-Passover food to donate to a Passover food drive. If we don't buy food, we make a financial donation. It's certainly an essential part of bringing value to our preparations, yet at that point, we have likely already put away our chametz.

The value of tzedakah can begin much earlier in our preparations. Rather than pack away our unopened chametzdik foods, we should consider donating these foods to a municipal food bank. We all know that financial times have made it more difficulty for families in need to feed themselves and their children. Instead of storing and selling, perhaps it's time to contribute to tzedakah and donate the chametz of our preparations and then continue with tzedakah as we donate Passover goods when we shop.

Passover isn't about keeping everything we have and creatively figuring out how to sell it. In fact, it's about understanding that freedom involves letting go of the things that encumber us in order to gain a broader view. What greater Jewish value can inform our preparations than the value of justice?

And, of course, Jewish text has already shown us the connection between Passover and tzedakah when it states that the midwives of Egypt not only disobeyed Pharaoh by not killing the baby boys as instructed, but they "kept them alive." The midrash explains the meaning of this by saying that the midwives were carrying tzedakah from house to house. When a wealthy woman gave birth, food was given from that house and brought to the house of a poor woman.

Within the tremendous injustices of Egypt, a tiny flicker of tzedakah informed our story, so it's only just that it inform our own Passover preparations.

Rachael Turkienicz can be reached at rachaelscentre.org.

Jewish Life

Archeology in Israel, Part 2

By ALEX GROPPER

Jewish interest in the archeology of Israel began as early as 1913, in the last days of Ottoman rule, when the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society first met. (This organization became the Israel Exploration Society in 1948).

Before the founding of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, the investigation of the material remains of ancient Israel had been the exclusive preserve of foreign scholars. World War I put a temporary halt to the fledgling institution's aspirations. But by 1920, the society once more reconstituted itself under the British Mandate and began to vigorously pursue its goals.

Past Forward

The society set up committees of financially supportive Jews in the United States, London, Paris, The Hague, and even Egypt. By the mid-1920s, it was involved in a number of excavations, including Jerusalem, where archeologist Eleazar Sukenik, the father of archeologist Yigael Yadin, started working under its auspices.

It was this era between the two world wars that would see the start of what would become the foundations of Israeli archeology. Besides Sukenik, other scholars such as Benjamin Mazar (formerly Maisler) of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which had been formed in 1925, would undertake the excavation of a number of crucial Jewish sites. All of this was going on despite Arab uprisings between 1929 and 1931.

Mazar began his career excavating the sites of Ramat Rahel, outside of Jerusalem, and Beit Shearim, noted for housing Jewish catacombs from the time of the Sanhedrin. Mazar, along with Sukenik, would go on to become one of the founders of the renowned Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He would also go on to become one of the university's early presidents. But it was his excavation of the Temple Mound in the late 1960s and '70s that would gain Mazar worldwide recognition.

His whole family was infused with his passion. His nephew, Ami, is a renowned archeologist who became the head of the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University and his granddaughter, Elat, is also quite well-known in archeological circles and beyond. She has continued her grandfather's work in Jerusalem, where she is heading some of the excavations at the City of David. She has recently found a structure that has been touted by some as being King David's palace.

In its early years, in addition to its excavations, the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society was also involved in other important work, such as publications, lectures, conferences and gathering artifacts for what would become the basis of the Israel Museum's important collection. Barely 10 years after its establishment, the society released a number of important publications, including two volumes of the Qobetz series and a detailed study of the 160 caves in the Jerusalem region. By 1933, the Qobetz series was replaced by Yediot, or the Bulletin of Jewish Palestine Exploration Society. In 1968, it in turn was replaced by Qadmoniot, or the Quarterly for the Antiquities of Eretz-Yisrael and Bible Lands.

Despite the onset of World War II, and the real danger of a possible invasion of Palestine by Rommel's Afrika Korps, the various activities of the archeological community continued uninterrupted throughout the war years. There was even a major conference in Jerusalem in 1943, attended by scholars and the general public. The archeological community's activities also continued during the turmoil surrounding the birth of the State of Israel in May 1948. With the achievement of independence in 1948, the society, under the leadership of Benjamin Mazar, officially became the Israel Exploration Society.

The newly created Jewish state was poised to undergo an explosion of archeological activity shortly after its birth. Archeological excavation would become a national pastime in Israel, and the excavators themselves would become household names in the new Jewish state.

Variations on flour and water

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Flour and water. How complicated could a matzah be? Plenty.

Many of us grew up crunching through boxes of square wheat-flour matzah. Nowadays, however, supermarket shelves are laden with many varieties of matzah. Today, a Passover Matzah Primer. (The laws of Passover are particularly complex. If you plan to deviate from your usual practice, consult your local rabbi and if necessary, your allergist.)

The Jewish Highway

(1) What does the Torah say?

It all started in Exodus where we are commanded to "eat matzah for seven days. By the first day, you must have your homes cleared of all leaven." (Exodus 12:15) Sounds simple enough. **[tinyurl.com/matzah02]**

(2) What if I can't stomach wheat flour?

For many years, wheat was virtually the only flour used in commercial matzah. However, the Torah actually also allows matzah made from barley, rye, oats and spelt. This can be a relief for people who are not able to digest wheat gluten. **[tinyurl.com/matzah04]**

GlutenFreeOatMatzos.com makes matzah from completely gluten-free oats grown in Scotland. Closer to home, LakewoodMatzoh.com sells gluten-free out and spelt matzah. **[tinyurl.com/ matzah06]** And just because you can't stomach gluten doesn't mean you have to be without matzah balls. Here's a recipe that substitutes matzah meal with almond meal and potato starch. **[tinyurl.com/matzah16]**

(3) I'm fine with wheat. But what can I do to avoid chemicals and pesticides?

I found only one reference to organic matzah online, at Chicago's Shmura Matzah Factory. **[tinyurl.com/matzah03]** When I last checked the factory's website, it wasn't working, but I found an archival copy of the site. **[tinyurl.com/matzah05]**

(4) What about egg matzah?

Much has been written about the symbolic meaning of matzah. "The characteristic of leavened dough (chametz) is that it rises and swells, symbolizing pride and boastfulness. A matzah, on the other hand, is thin and flat, suggesting meekness and humility. Passover teaches us that chametz – arrogance – is the very antithesis of the ideal of Torah." **[tinyurl.com/matzah07]** Tied into this issue of humility, Jews are required to eat plain flour and water matzah in order to fulfil the mitzvah on seder nights. But what about the rest of the holiday? Here's where things get complicated, since there are different rules for Ashkenazi Jews (more restrictive) and Sephardim (less restrictive). **[tinyurl.com/matzah01]**

(5) Does matzah have to be so hard?

For Ashkenazim, yes, that's the tradition. Once again, it seems that Sephardim have the edge here with soft matzah. **[tinyurl.com/matzah10]** I came across one blogger who describes the texture and taste of soft matzah. One key difference is that "they come frozen, and you are not supposed to let them defrost until five minutes before you are going to eat them, or else they will go stale." **[tinyurl. com/matzah09]**

(6) How much do I have to eat?

On the seder night, the minimum amount is based on the volume equivalent to that of an olive, known as a "*kezayit*." A *kezayit* is roughly two-thirds of a square matzah or one half of a handmade round matzah. **[tinyurl.com/matzah11]** If that sounds like more than you want to eat, you may be in luck. Researchers from Bar-Ilan University's archeological botanics lab have been analyzing ancient olives. They maintain that the ancient Syrian and Nabali strains were smaller than today's olives. If rabbinically endorsed, this would be good news for those who have trouble digesting too much of the unleavened bread. **[tinyurl.com/matzah13]**

(7) How much weight will I gain?

A single one-ounce plain matzah contains approximately 120 to130 calories. It has about one gram of dietary fibre, little fat and no cholesterol or sugar. A single whole-wheat matzah has about 100 calories and three grams of dietary fibre. **[tinyurl.com/matzah12]**

(8) Are there any good matzah jokes?

A Jewish man was eating his Pesach in the park. A blind man came by and sat down next to him on the bench. Feeling neighbourly, the Jewish man passed a sheet of matzah to him. The blind man ran his fingers over the matzah for a few minutes, looked puzzled, and finally exclaimed, "Who wrote this nonsense?" **[tinyurl.com/matzah14]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

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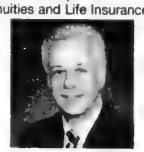

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Teaching without being too 'teachy'

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Sara Borer, a music therapist by profession, has been a madrichah for Birthright Israel and a counsellor at Camp George.

"They are our teachers..."

Now she brings informal education to her teenage students at the First Narayever Congregation. "Basically we sit around a table in a circle, or on the floor," Borer said in an interview. "The students come in, take off their shoes and they plunk themselves down."

Her ability to communicate through music "enriches her teaching significantly," said Rabbi Ed Elkin, the shul's spiritual leader, who hired her. As well, he said, she brings "great warmth and enthusiasm" to the two groups of teenagers she meets with once a week at the downtown synagogue.

A graduate of United Synagogue Day School and Earl Haig Secondary School's music program, Borer – now the 29-year-old stay-at-home mother of a one-year-old daughter – was president of the Jewish Students' Association when she attended Wilfrid Laurier University.

From a Jewish perspective, high school was a formative experience for her, she said. Going from a Jewish environment to a mostly non-Jewish one forced her to make decisions about issues such as taking time off for Sukkot when most of the other Jewish students weren't, and when most of her teachers had never heard of the holiday.

A lesson from the teacher: *"I prefer to think of teaching as mentoring, in a way. I think students will learn a lot more from what they see me do rather than from what I say. They can see that I'm excited about Judaism, and that's a positive thing."*

Borer has continued her Jewish education informally over the years though lectures, talks and discussions. She and her husband, Terry, whom she met at Earl Haig, try to keep up with Israeli pop culture and politics, she said.

In Rabbi Elkin's view, Borer models for her students "that a Diaspora Jewish person can master Hebrew and live a life here that is filled with love for the Hebrew language" and for Israel.

Borer said she does a lot of singing with her students. Although she plays piano and guitar, and dabbles in flute, viola and percussion, her voice is her "major instrument," she said.

"I bring in songs that are adaptations of prayers. We would learn the songs, then talk about the prayers."

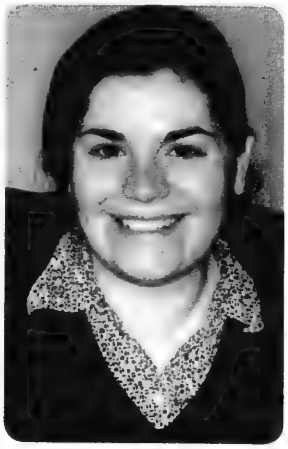
A favourite of hers is Debbie Friedman's Asher Yatzar/Elohai, which combines the blessing recited after using the bathroom with a daily morning prayer thanking God for one's soul.

She sees it as a good springboard for discussion about Judaism not "denying the body in order to nourish the spirit."

As an informal educator, her biggest challenge is "actually teaching students something in a way they don't feel is too 'teachy,'" Borer said.

"Informal education is not linear. You see pockets of knowledge that aren't connected... It's tempting sometimes to say, 'Let's go back to the basics and fill in the gaps.'"

"We do the pockets of knowledge, and as much as possible we try to connect them."

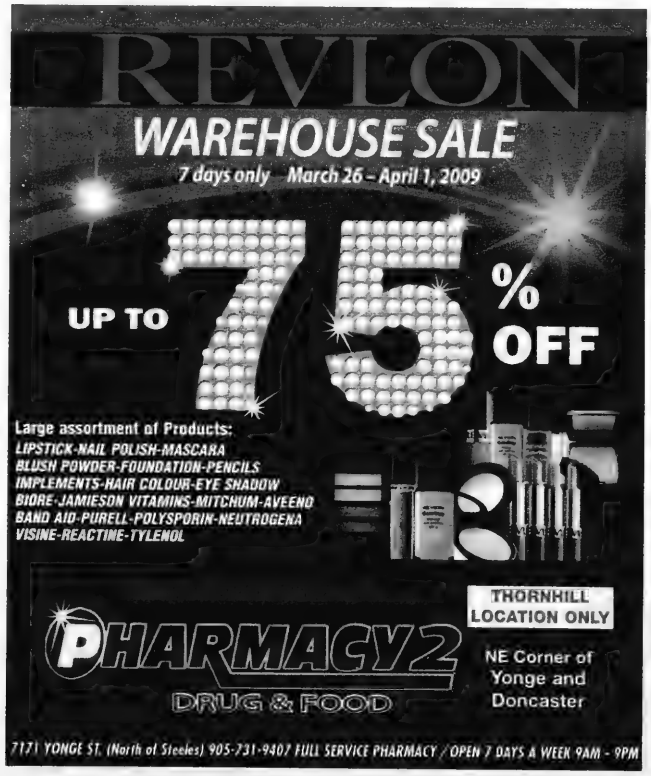


Sara Borer

Borer hopes that her efforts will inspire students to seek further knowledge.

Every so often, she runs an "everything you wanted to know about Judaism but didn't have time to ask" class. As a rule, she finds teens are most interested in contemporary issues and how Judaism fits into life.

Although her classes are small – she has one group of four 13-, 14- and 15-year-olds, and another group of seven 16-to-18-year-olds – Borer said she believes it's "worth nurturing" even very small numbers of kids.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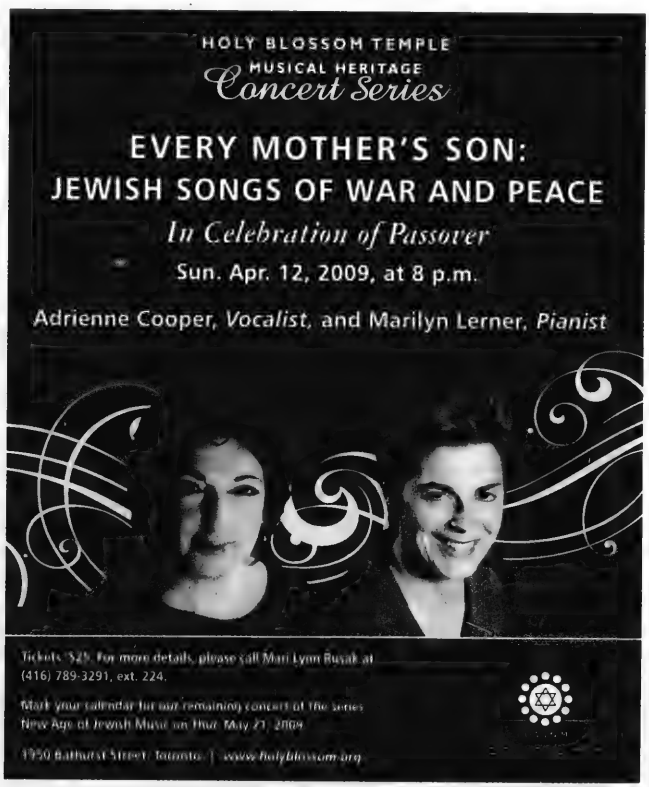
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Greater Toronto Area

Mercaz cuts hurt Jewish unity, continuity

By JACK LIPINSKY

Guest Voice

I used to feel such anticipation before the annual city-wide professional development day for teachers sponsored by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Mercaz/ Board of Jewish Education.

Of course, this day provided the opportunity to learn from noted Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals and educators, as well as a forum for discovery and the discussion of new approaches to student engagement. But best of all was the energy that filled the room from the diversity of the Jewish day school educators who attended. Men in *kippot srugot* (crocheted kippot) sat next to women in jeans, while observant women with a variety of head coverings mingled with men with uncovered heads.

There was unity in our diversity.

On those annual PD days, one could see the multiple faces of our community and the broad agreement among very diverse polities on the seminal role of Jewish education.

This idyllic portrait of Jewish education will soon be a memory.

In an entirely unanticipated move earlier this month, the federation eviscerated the Mercaz, the communal co-ordinating agency and clearing house that has served our community for almost 60 years — most of those years under its previous moniker, the Board of Jewish Education.

What the Mercaz lacked in coercive power was compensated for by the creativity of its leadership. They pioneered and co-ordinated events that showcased Jewish education's best product – our students and their many talents. The showcases included events such as the Chidon Hatanach (Bible Contest), Zimriya, Rikudiya and creative writing contests. In short, the Mercaz ensured a celebration of our children's intellectual, artistic and physical talents in ways that rose above communal segmentation.

The Mercaz also constantly strove to improve teacher training, curriculum delivery and professional knowledge to ensure that Jewish day and supplementary teachers could deliver Jewish studies in a vital manner that engages students.

This is the bedrock of Jewish survival in the Diaspora.

As if this were not enough, the Mercaz was also in charge of teacher training and categorization, which determines the salaries of a large number of Jewish day and supplementary school teachers.

Against these facts, the decision to eviscerate the Mercaz was both poorly planned and organizationally imprudent.

The federation informed the community in its news release that their decision was the result of ongoing discussions and had nothing to do with the economy. The federation emphasizes this: that what they called "restructuring" and what I consider to be the destruction of the vital underpinning of Jewish continuity in our community was carefully planned and had nothing to do with the horrible state of the economy.

The claim that the schools themselves will somehow take on extracurricular activities is belied by the educators interviewed in The CJN's story about the cuts. All of them seemed surprised by the downloading of services. It seems that federation planners overlooked consulting with these key stakeholders.

What the federation hails as "capacity building" is simply duplicating services without offering a central planning agency. Indeed, "capacity building" only fuels an institutional desire, if not also a need, to expand to incorporate the service delivery that has been newly delegated to them.

Federation president David Koschitzsky explained: "Our new approach demonstrates confidence in Toronto's excellent day schools. Our modern, dynamic educators have reached the point where they do not need us to deliver services."

This is news to me.

I have considerable experience in education. I've won three teaching awards, earned a doctorate related to pedagogy, and written a textbook and curriculum. When the day comes that I don't need professional development, it will be time for me to quit the profession. Even experienced teachers – in both day and supplementary schools – constantly need the tools to help place before our students a vision of why being Jewish is relevant. We are the classroom defenders and champions of Jewish continuity!

But why should federation ask the stakeholders in the classes when it apparently did not ask the main funders of education either – that is, the parents of children in the schools? Surely parents paying thousands of dollars for their children's' education are also concerned about the standards and quality of the education in the various schools that were supported by the staff of the Mercaz.

No one at federation has spoken about the future of the Board of License beyond vague statements that perhaps York University's Faculty of Jewish Education might get involved in this and some other functions of the former Mercaz.

The Board of License is responsible for evaluating most Jewish studies teachers' credentials. It attempts to ensure professional standards and establish remuneration categories for teachers. Teachers go to the board to obtain their teacher category when they graduate from teacher training or arrive in Toronto. Many return frequently to be re-categorized after taking professional development courses often under Mercaz auspices.

I am a member of the board. We spent almost a year completely updating teacher categories to reflect important changes in teacher training both here and in Israel. Who will do this in September?

Continued on page 20

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'Seder for solidarity' serves diverse population

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Ve'ahavta: The Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee is hosting its 10th annual Passover seder on April 9, the night of the second seder.

Jacqueline Stein, who is organizing the event in collaboration with Habonim Congregation, said she expects between 125 and 130 people, both Jews and non-Jews, the majority of whom live on the streets or in subsidized housing.

The theme of the event is a "seder for solidarity" she said.

"I want the Jewish public to know that unified communities where religious and cultural differences are not only accepted but also celebrated is a model of the present and of the future."

The traditional, kosher seder – most of the food is donated – will be led by Habonim's religious leader, Eli Rubenstein, and will be inclusive, she said. "It gives people a better understanding of Jewish culture and history."

In keeping with the theme, she is planning a photo exhibition to be displayed at the seder about Toronto's diverse communities.

"We're having a photographer go out and take pictures throughout the city. We want the people to have a sense of what's going on in the city and who their neighbours are."

The seder has a strong following, and many of its guests look forward to it each year. "People do come because of the meal, but they also come because they have an appreciation for the event and what it stands for," she said.

"There is no assigned seating, because we want friends to sit together. With entertainment for the children, there is an air of liveliness throughout the evening."

She has spread word about the seder at shelters throughout the city, and agencies such as Jewish Family & Child pass on information to their clients, said Stein.

To find out more about the seder – there are a number of spots available for synagogue members and paying guests – call 416-964-7698.

PESACH PREPARATIONS: Pesach preparations are in full swing at Leo Baeck Day School's Thornhill campus. Last week, senior kindergarten students teamed up with their Grade 6 buddies to create papier-mâché seder plates that will have pride of place at their family seders. Pictured, from left, are Rebeca Barkin, Malorie Appel, Aubrey Nadler and Brian Kurzman.

Mercaz should not be eviscerated

Continued from page 19

Every significant academic study has linked Jewish education with Jewish continuity. In a world where Googling competes with and threatens the authority of traditional modes of educational delivery, we must package Jewish education in as many wrappings as possible to maximize "buy-in" among students and parents alike. Federation's concern for Jewish continuity should translate into policies that strengthen Jewish education. The Mercaz decision weakens education in our community.

Administrators struggling with declining enrolment, diminishing budgets, differentiating their programs from others, and the challenges of running their own institutions lack the time and vision to plan for the whole community.

Teachers "in the trenches" who spend hours marking and planning also lack the time and expertise for central educational planning.

We need the Mercaz. It may have to be streamlined, but not eviscerated. Jewish continuity deserves better.

Jack Lipinsky teaches at United Synagogue Day School and the University of Toronto and is the author of Facing History and Ourselves.

McGill students defy anti-Israel environment

By EZRA GLINTER
Special to The CJN

MONTREAL — In a campus atmosphere frequently permeated by anti-Israel sentiment, students came together to celebrate Israel and its culture.

Some 100 McGill University students recently gathered for I-Fest, an annual festival sponsored by Hillel McGill. Students enjoyed Israeli food and music at Gert's, the campus bar, while improving their knowledge of Israel.

Although the event took place during Israeli Apartheid Week as a response to the anti-Israel organizations that sought to cast the Jewish state as a racist entity, organizers of I-Fest stressed that the event was not meant to be political or religious.

Seen beside the Israeli hall of fame at the recent Hillel-sponsored I-Fest are Arielle Strub, left, and Victoria Shore.

"We did it on purpose during Israeli Apartheid Week, so there would be another option," said Shayla Young, a second-year business student from Toronto who co-chaired the event.

"It caused people to think about Israel in ways other than religion or politics," added Alison Currie, a second-year sociology student who just started attending Hillel events this year.

"It's a rare occasion for people to celebrate Israel, not in a religious or political sense. It was just to have fun," Currie said.

The evening featured free falafel and an acoustic performance by Tara Hall, a McGill-based band, who performed in front of a backdrop for Mike's Place, a well-known Jerusalem bar. The venue was decorated with Israel-related displays, including a model of the Western Wall and an Israeli hall of fame that included poet Yehuda Amichai, architect Moshe Safdie and filmmaker Ari Folman.

Other activities included printing Hebrew T-shirts and getting a bookmark with one's Hebrew name. The event also featured displays by MASA and the Bronfman Israel Experience Centre, organizations that facilitate travel to Israel and helped defray the costs of the event.

This year's I-Fest was the fourth annual event of its kind, and the second to be held at Gert's. According to the event's organizers, the venue was chosen for its proximity and convenience.

"We decided to do it in Gert's because it's on campus and people know about it. It's also a smaller place and more intimate," said Sara Collis, a second-year management student from Toronto who helped organize the event.

Although some of the event's organizers thought that the publicity for next year's I-Fest could be improved, by and large they were happy with the turnout. According to their estimates, about half of the attendees were newcomers to Hillel-sponsored activities.

"We thought it was a great turnout, especially considering the Israeli Apartheid Week activities that have been taking place," Young said.

"I think it went great this year," Collis added. "There were plenty of new faces, both Jews and non-Jews. But I'd like to see even more people out next year."

Joint project discussed

MONTREAL — The agriculture departments of McGill University and Hebrew University of Jerusalem are discussing the creation of a joint project that would help the impoverished African country of Malawi feed itself.

Eli Feinerman, dean of Hebrew U's faculty of agriculture, food and environment, was in Montreal recently for talks with Chandra Madramootoo, dean of McGill's faculty of agricultural and environmental sciences.

Principal funding for the project is expected to come from the Canadian International Development Agency. McGill and Hebrew U's agriculture departments have not engaged in formal co-operation in about 20 years.

For full story, please go to cjnews.com

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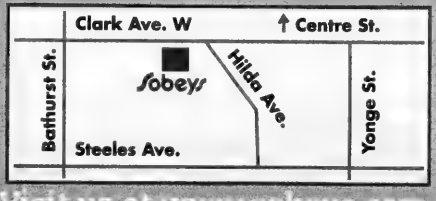

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McMaster initiative seeks to lessen tension

By ABIGAIL CUKIER
Special to the CJN

HAMILTON — As universities across the country try to defuse hostilities between pro-Palestinian groups and Jewish students, McMaster University in Hamilton has brokered a peace deal that it hopes will lessen tensions.

The "McMaster Peace Initiative" was signed earlier this month by university president Peter George and representatives of McMaster Muslims for Peace and Justice, the Jewish Students Association, the Muslim Student Association, Israel on Campus and the McMaster Jewish Faculty Association.

The groups have agreed that in the event of any hate or intimidation incidents, the promotion of hatred, property damage or acts endangering the safety of others on campus that a joint response will be issued to condemn the act. The agreement also includes plans to foster balanced discussion on Mideast issues.

> ***'We decided to bring groups together'***

"We decided to do something no one else had thought to do before: speak to the groups and bring them together," said Milé Komlen, director of McMaster's office of human rights and equity services. "Instead of demonization and dehumanization, this puts a face on the other. It engages the groups to move to understand each other."

Komlen said future steps might include course work on the Middle East conflict or summer sessions on peace studies, as well as engaging the mainstream campus community in a "solution-finding process."

Hamilton police ran a hate crimes investigation into incidents last year at McMaster during Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW). Held annually at campuses around the world, the event likens Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to South Africa's treatment of non-whites during the apartheid era.

At McMaster, pro-Palestinian students handed out what was perceived by many Jewish students to be "inflammatory" literature. Orders for a banner to be removed led to demands for free speech from anti-Israel event organizers, who held a protest rally over the issue.

At the rally, protesters allegedly intimidated a number of Jewish students, with some people yelling slogans such as, "Death to Jews" and "Viva jihad." Some students were also allegedly accosted in the library by protesters.

Police couldn't proceed with charges, however, as they couldn't gather enough proof of individual identity or motive.

This year's IAW events earlier this month at McMaster were toned down, which some attribute to the peace initiative.

But Dr. Lawrence Hart, a CJN columnist as well as an associate professor in the school's faculty of health sciences and president of the McMaster Jewish Faculty Association, is troubled by the very name of the event.

"We had difficulty trying to impress upon the administration the abomination of the terminology 'Israeli apartheid' and how offensive and hurtful it is to Jewish students," said Hart, who is a native of South Africa. "If they are not willing to move aside from that, until then, no document is going to be enforceable."

Komlen described the IAW event as a way for student groups to bring attention to their issues.

"It may be offensive to certain communities, but it's in the context of a university and freedom of expression," he said.

Despite his concerns, Hart signed the peace initiative document and said that he hopes it will help the university community "get away from the demonization and delegitimization of Israel and move on to scholarly discourse."

He added that "it indicates a commitment on the part of the administration to do things differently" and said "great credit goes to the administration for taking part in this process. We really made some progress – as long as the principles and spirit of the document are respected."

He cautioned that the litmus test will be whether the document is enforced.

With news last week that York University is forming a task force to find ways to solve conflicts between pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian factions on that campus, Komlen hopes McMaster's initiative will be a model for other institutions.

"We are eager to provide an example of what can be done when groups come together in a good faith effort to embrace their differences and engage in difficult discussions," he said. "People at McMaster are optimistic it may promote a lot of hope for students and the broader community. The hard work begins now."

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On Campus

York to probe clashes

JTA

York University announced last week that it will launch a probe into recent clashes on campus relating to the Middle East.

On March 16, York president Mamdouh Shoukri announced the creation of the Task Force on Student Life, Learning and Community. It will be composed of seven faculty members and seven students and/or alumni from the university. It's slated to deliver a preliminary report to Shoukri by Aug. 31.

York University said it formed the task force "to review concerns about the student environment" on campus.

The move was welcomed by Jewish students and communal leaders.

Jewish students have complained of a toxic atmosphere on campus arising from Israel's recent military incursion into the Gaza Strip.

On Feb. 11, about 100 anti-Israel protesters barricaded Jewish students in a Hillel lounge and shouted anti-Semitic and anti-Israel slurs. Police were forced to escort Jewish students from the lounge to ensure their safety.

Other anti-Semitic incidents, including graffiti and verbal attacks, continue to be reported on campus.

"Recent events on campus have raised serious concerns over whether our most cherished values and commitments are being undermined by excessive conflict, intolerance and even intimidation," said the task force's terms of reference.

"We are pleased that the university hastaken into account the deep concerns expressed by our community," said David Koschitzky, chair of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

"We will lend support to this task force with the expectation that it will lead to a campus that respects civil discourse and the fair enforcement of the rules," said Daniel Ferman, president of Hillel at York.

"We also urge the York administration to address the immediate safety concerns affecting Jewish students on campus prior to the Aug. 31 deadline of this task force," he said.

Speaking to The CJN last week, Rob Tiffin, York's vice-president of students, said the university is encouraging students and alumni who are interested in serving on the task force to submit letters of intent by Friday, March 27.

Patrick Monahan, the dean of Osgoode Hall Law School who will become York's provost on July 1, will lead the task force.

According to the university's terms of reference, the task force's primary mandate will be to develop "principled recommendations that reflect this university's unwavering commitment to fundamental values of free expression, free inquiry, and respect for genuine diversity of thought and opinion."

The terms of reference lay out the following questions for the task force to answer:

- "Are the university's current policies and practices adequate to ensure that the free exchange of ideas can occur in an environment free of discrimination, harassment or intimidation?"
- "Are there measures that can and should be undertaken to enhance the learning environment for students at York, both inside and outside of the classroom?"
- "How do we provide opportunities for students to be intellectually challenged, exposed to provocative issues and discussions, and encouraged to examine their beliefs and decisions?"
- "Are the university's current policies and practices regarding the use of community space by individuals and groups appropriate?
- "How should the university respond to incidents or behaviours that do not meet the community's expectations with respect to tolerance of and respect for diversity of views of members of the York community?"

With files from Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf

Student elections held at York

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

Elections for the York Federation of Students, held March 17 to 20, resulted in the defeat of candidates for York Forward, a slate that had opposed members of the old YFS executive for supporting the recent 12-week strike by York University teaching assistants and for having what slate members said is an anti-Israel bias.

All but one of the 16 candidates who ran for YFS positions under the York Forward banner were defeated.

Based on an unratified vote count, the slate Students First – led by outgoing YFS vice-president of equity Krisna Saravanamuttu, who was running for council president – won all the key executive positions, YFS chief returning officer Casey Chu Cheong said Monday.

Official results and vote tallies were unavailable at The CJN's deadline.

Daniel Ferman, president of Hillel at York and a York Forward candidate, won his race to represent the Schulich School of Business on YFS. He said he's happy he won, but suggested that "the integrity of the electoral process" was compromised.

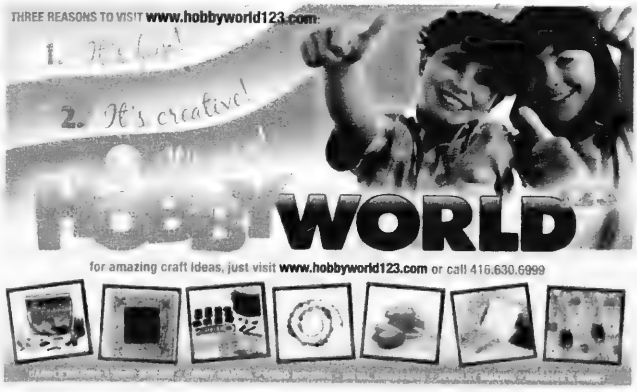
"Many of the concerns stem from the use of a paper balloting system, which has few checks and balances. The ballots aren't numbered, and the elections process is administered by those that are currently in government and not an independent third party," Ferman said.

"People also mysteriously disappeared from the voters list. Many people were told they voted when they had not. In one case, a student was told they voted at a time when they purchased something downtown and have the receipt to prove it."

Ferman added that York Forward is evaluating its options before making a decision about appealing the results or demanding a recount.

MIND, BODY, ATTITUDE: Girls from three local BBYO chapters took part in the group's "Mind, Body, Attitude" overnight program on March 7 at BBYO's teen lounge in North York. Designed to promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being, the teen-led program covered self-defence, conflict management, and healthy lifestyle choices.

A SPECIAL HAGGADAH: Junior kindergarten students at Associated Hebrew Schools' Posluns Education Centre on Neptune Drive dressed as characters from the Passover story and learned about the holiday by re-enacting different scenes from the story. Pictures of each scene were taken and will be used to illustrate a special child-friendly Haggadah that the students will use at their model seder on March 31 and bring home for use at their family seders.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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish News

Kevin Zaldin, Sherri Schwartz and big brother Aidan are proud to announce the birth of Gracie Raquel Zaldin.

Mazel tov Sam & Ella Rozencwajg on your 60th anniversary. All our love, Willie & Marla, Morris & Pam, Jerry & Sherry, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

onlysimchas!

Celebrating Jewish Life

Mazel tov to Rachel Minzer & Melech Weiss on their recent engagement.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Chaya Sara Silverstein & Luzy Kleinman.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Sruly "Izzy" Moskovits & Miriam Fuchs.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Yossi Fischler & Leah Markowitz.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Karen Rossman & Dovie Rush.

Mazel tov to Sruly Osherovitz & Miriam Eyal on their recent engagment.

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What's New Deadlines. NOTE HOLIDAY DEADLINES. Tuesday, March 31, is the deadline for the April 17 issue and Monday, April 6, is the deadline for the April 23 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Thursday, March 26

LITERARY LEVEE

Miriam and ATID chapters of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO host A Literary Levee, 2009. 6:45-9 p.m. at the North Toronto Memorial Community Centre. Reserve in advance, $36, 416-630-8373 or levee2009@hotmail.com

SEDER PREPARATION

Rabbi Yoni Berlin, principal of Ulpanat Orot, leads a seder workshop on the commandment to "tell the story" of leaving Egypt. 8 p.m. Or Chaim Yeshiva. Free. www.mekorot.ca or 416-877-2050

THE HAGGADAH

Darchei Noam Congregation offers "How Did That Get Into the Haggadah?" with **Eric Mendelsohn**. 7:30 p.m. 416-638-4783 or www.darcheinoam.ca

FRUM ON OBAMA & ISRAEL

Canadian Friends of Laniado Hospital presents **David Frum** on "A Frightening Question: The Obama Administration and the Security of Israel." 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. $18. Reserve, 416-785-8946.

Friday, March 27

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE

Bring the family to Beth Sholom Synagogue's Friday Night Live Kabalat Shabbat with **Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich**, **Cantor Eric Moses** and the Friday Night Live Band. 6 p.m. Followed by dinner with children's entertainment. Reserve for dinner in advance, 416-783-6103 or andrea@bethsholom.net.

Saturday, March 28

HOT HAVANA

The Winchevsky Centre and the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association host storyteller **Brian Gordon Sinclair** performing his one-man play Hemingway's Hot Havana. 8 p.m. Proceeds to be donated to Cuba Hurricane Relief Fund. Suggested donation $15. www.winchevsky.org or 416-789-5502

FIGHTING ANTI-SEMITISM

Beth Tzedec men's club hosts men's club Shabbat services, 8:45 a.m. **Senator Jerry Grafstein** speaks on "The Rising Tide of Anti-Semitism and How To Fight It" from the pulpit. 416-781-3511

PARTNERSHIP MINYAN

The Partnership Minyan meets at Heschel School. Enter from Faywood Ave. 9:30 a.m. Child care available. http://sites.google.com/site/torontopartnershipminyan/Minyan

NA'AMAT CHARITY BINGO

Simcha/Kadima of Na'amat Canada holds a Charity Bingo Extravaganza at the Borochov Centre. 7:30 p.m. $20, includes cards, refreshments, door prizes and a live auction. 416-636-5425

BBYO 'BEAUHEART' BALL

B'nai Brith Youth invites all teens to dance the night away at the Beauheart Ball. 8:30 p.m. Tickets, 416-398-2004.

Sunday, March 29

BREAKFAST LECTURE

Beth David Congregation presents **Arlene Kushnir** on "The Life and Times of **Modigliani**: Jewish Artist Extraordinaire." 9 a.m. $5. 416-633-5500 or www.bethdavid.com

HEALTH: BRIDGE TO PEACE

Beth Tzedec men's club hosts a discussion on "Health as a Bridge to Peace? Promoting Arab and Israeli Co-operation Through Health Initiatives: A 13-year Experience." with **Dr. Arnold Noyek**, founder,

Continued on page 27

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What's New

Continued from page 26

Canada International Scientific Exchange Program. 10 a.m. 416-781-3511

SHPIEL OR NO SHPIEL

Friends of Yiddish presents Shpiel or No Shpiel with singer **Mitch Smolkin**, pianist **Nina Shapilsky** and MC **Jack Newman**. 2 p.m. at the Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Guests $5. RSVP, 416-736-8073 or 416-458-1440.

OUT OF THE (MATZAH) BOX

Take a break from Pesach preparations for a pre-Pesach program for children 2-6 and their parents at Associated Hebrew Schools, 18 Neptune Dr. Make a haggadah, matzah covers, enjoy music and a storyteller. 3:30-5 p.m. Free. Preregister, 905-889-3998, ext. 337, or pgreenspan@ahschools.com.

CAVALCADE OF STARS

The Shaarei Shomayim Congregation presents an evening of Jewish song starring The Gypsy Flame with **Yakov Kertzman, Vira Burmenko, Paul Mathew, Bill Berle, Gord Lindsay, Randall Craig** and **Richie Idels**. Proceeds to support Jews for Judaism. 6:45 p.m. $18 or $29/couple. 416-789-3213.

CDN JEWS & SIX-DAY WAR

Darchei Noam Congregation hosts the annual **Elka Klein** Memorial Lecture, "Canadian Jews and the Six-Day War" with **Hesh Troper**, of U of T. 7:30 p.m. 416-638-4783 or www.darcheinoam.ca

SHTICKS AND TONES

Shticks and Tones, the fifth annual charity concert performed by the Varsity Jews, U of T's Jewish a cappella choir. Proceeds support Te-Amim: Tolerance Education Through the Arts. 7:30 p.m. Holy Blossom Temple. Tickets $8-$72, 416-913-2424 or at the door. www.varsityjews.com

Monday, March 30

BETH TZEDEC BOOK CLUB

Beth Tzedec Library Book Club presents **Cynthia Good**, on A Sharp Intake of Breath by **John Miller**. $15. 416-781-3514, ext. 225

CAREGIVERS WORKSHOP

The Family Resource Centre offers a free Passover workshop for caregivers. Ask questions, taste traditional foods and learn about the holidays with friends. 7:30-9 p.m. Promenade Mall, #313. Registration required, **Fran Chodak**, 905-882-8509.

JUDAISM & ENVIRONMENT

Beth Emeth Synagogue hosts a panel discussion on "Judaism and the Environment" with **Rabbi Howard Morrison** and **Kim Jarvi**, environmental spokesperson of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario; and **Hilda Swirsky**, R.N., front-line clinician, Mount Sinai Hospital. 8:15 p.m. RSVP, 416-633-3838.

Tuesday, March 31

CHUG HATANACH

Mark Smiley leads a study group in a discussion of Nehemiah, Chapter 9. 8 p.m. at Beth David Congregation. All welcome.

STORYTELLING FESTIVAL

The 2009 Toronto Festival of Storytelling hosts Because God Loves Stories with **Ralph Benmergui**, storytellers **Eli Rubenstein** and **Dan Yashinsky**, and musicians **Mayumi Seiler** and **Ernie Tollar**. 8 p.m. at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, $15, students, seniors, unwaged $12.

Wednesday, April 1

2009 PESACH EXPERIENCE

Join **Cantor Simon Spiro** and **Aliza Spiro** for songs, ideas and explanations to make a seder child-friendly. 7:30 p.m. at Beth Tzedec Congregation. 416-781-3511

NETIVOT SOUTH CAMPUS

Netivot HaTorah, an Orthodox Zionist day school, is holding an information session on its early childhood program at the south campus. 8 p.m. at 518 Glencairn Ave. 905-771-1234, ext. 211

Other News

BLESSING THE SUN

On Monday, March 30, 9:30 a.m., and again Tuesday, March 31, 8 p.m., **Rabbi Chaim Strauchler** speaks about "Blessing the Sun," a prayer recited every 28 years, the next time being April 8. At Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. 416-789-3213

ORGANIC GARDENING

Learn about a new project that supports and promotes Jewish organic agriculture in the GTA. Meet Jewish organic farmer, **Daniel Hoffman** and find out about the Tikkun Adamah Community Supported Agriculture project. Thursday, April 2, 7:30 p.m. at CHAT Kimel Education Centre. www.torathateva.org/csa.htm

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 32

VIOLENCE TO VIOLINS

Support "From Violence to Violins," a project that provides schoolchildren from low-income Toronto areas with the chance to learn life skills with free violins and music classes, at a concert by violist **Moshe Hammer** at the Petroff Gallery, Thursday, April 2, 8 p.m. Suggested donation $60. RSVP, 416-782-1696 or info@petroffgallery.com

INVITE SEDER GUESTS

Jewish Immigrant Aid Services needs seder hosts for a newcomer family to Canada. To invite a family, call 416-630-6481, ext. 30.

COMMUNAL SEDERS

Chabad of Midtown, MNjcc and **Jewish Family and Child** host a community seder Wednesday, April 8, 7:30-10:30 p.m. At the Miles Nadal JCC. Enjoy an inspirational seder and Passover dinner in a traditional setting led by **Rabbi Nechemia Dietsch**. Reserve, Chabad, 416-516-2005; Jewish Family and Child, 416-961-9344. Before March 30, $50, $25 per child ages 3-12. After March 30, $60, $35 per child.

Beth Tzedec Congregation hosts a seder Thursday, April 9, 8:45 p.m. with **Rabbis Sean** and **Jennifer Gorman**. $95, children (3-13) $65. reserve by April 1. 416-781-3511

Temple Har Zion hosts a seder led by **Rabbi Cory Weiss**. Thursday, April 9, 6:30 p.m. $60, children (4-12) $30. 905-889-2252

PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM

Baycrest Centre is looking for volunteers to become part of its palliative care team. Spend time with patients who are in their last stages of life. Contribute an enormous amount of emotional support and guidance to the patients and their families. Training begins in April. Register, 416 785-2500, ext. 2572.

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child, 4600 Bathurst St. Call **Shawna** 416-638-7800, ext. 215, for info and registration. www.jfandcs.com

Birthdays, Hockey Games and Holidays: Making It Work After Divorce. A workshop Monday, March 30, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green Building.

Adult Children Losing a Parent: Six sessions beginning Tuesday, March 31, 7:30-9 p.m. Lipa Green Building.

FOR SENIORS

Successful Step-parenting: Six sessions for couples living in blended families who want to build a solid relationship. Discuss myths and realities of step-families and helping children to adjust. Begins Monday, April 6, 7:30-9 p.m. at Promenade Mall, # 313.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets Tuesdays at 10 a.m. at the Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 416-630-9444

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Mah-jong players wanted. Sunday dance, March 29, 7-10 p.m. Info, Tuesday-Thursday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 416-395-7881

Beth Emeth Club Sameach 50+, Ballroom Boot Camp. March 31, 7:30 p.m. $6, non-members $10. RSVP, 416-633-3838

Beth Tzedec Haverim Program hosts a discussion (and slides) of Southeast Asia, Vietnam, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand and Singapore seen through Jewish Eyes, with **Rochelle Carrady**. Monday, April 6, 1:30 p.m. $3. 416-781-3511

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Concert, Thursday, March 26, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Lecture, "Update on Israel" with **Mordechai Ben-Dat**, editor of The CJN. Tuesday, March 31, 10-11:30 a.m. $3, non-members $6.

Sign up for fitness classes at Betel. New session begins April 5. Prices begin at $3. Call **Amanda**, ext. 126.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Israel Summer Adventure: Find out about Kolel's Israel summer trip for singles, couples, and families with children post bar/bat mitzvah. March 30, 8 p.m. Ext 472.

Passover Break Camp, April 16-17. centrecamp@bjcc.ca or ext. 378

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

"Jews and Baseball," with **Charles Novogrodsky**. Sunday, March 29, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. $9, includes a light breakfast.

Noah's Great Rainbow, a new Canadian play, featuring Afro-klezmer-rap music, about the aftershocks of genocide. Student performances 12:30 p.m. through April 3. 647-866-0245 or paulene@noahsgreatrainbow.com. Tickets, ext. 0.

Cooking with **Itka**: "Passover Panic: Keep the Tradition Going." Learn to make a seder plate, three kinds of charoset and more. Sunday, April 5, 1:30-4:40 p.m. $18. Register, ext. 0.

OBITUARIES and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Anna Svetlitsa	Mar 1/09	280 Wellesley St E
Reta Cott	Mar 7/09	2 Neptune Dr
Irving Hoffman	Mar 7/09	111 Avenue Rd
Sherry (Sharon) Levy	Mar 8/09	14 York Ridge Rd
David Scheer	Mar 8/09	343 Clark Ave W
Elizabeth Klenko	Mar 8/09	79 White Lodge Cr
Pauline Stemeroff	Mar 8/09	40 Snowshoe Millway
Joseph Cohen	Mar 7/09	10 Shallmar Blvd
Lola Oksner	Mar 9/09	7 Townsgate Dr
Simha Wilson	Mar 6/09	135 Antibes Dr
Harry (Big E) Ehrenworth	Mar 9/09	31 Fairway Heights Dr
Loretta Yaskiel	Mar 8/09	400 Walmer Rd
Pauline Gluckstein	Mar 9/09	3560 Bathurst St
Mac Klein	Mar 8/09	90 Fisherville Rd
Tillie Leslie	Mar 9/09	355 St. Clair Ave W
Jonathon Talbot	Mar 10/09	231 Livingston Rd
Nettie Gordon	Mar 9/09	63 St. Clair Ave W
Mikhail Krugfyak	Mar 11/09	12 Goldfinch Crt
Lillian Goldstein	Mar 12/09	3560 Bathurst St
Nathan (Natie) Levine	Mar 11/09	44 Fontainbleau Dr
Rene Mepen	Mar 11/09	541 Finch Ave W
Lisbeth Kress	Mar 11/09	10 Senlac Rd
Shirley Gladstone	Mar 12/09	65 Skymark Dr
Tanya Dubrovsky	Mar 13/09	5444 Yonge St
Lillian Soiferman	Mar 13/09	1035 Eglinton Ave W

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Krybus, Rachela	Mar 9/09	3560 Bathurst St
Malet, Paula Heather	Mar 8/09	465 Worth Blvd
Lambert, Freda	Mar 8/09	16 Christine Crt
Rosenholtz, Ziskind	Mar 10/09	234 Thornhill Woods
Fichtenbaum, Solomon	Mar 10/09	86 Invermay Ave
Kaplan, Rabbi David	Mar 10/09	
Simai, Miklos	Mar 10/09	850 Steeles Ave. W.
Indik, Moshe	Mar 10/09	3560 Bathurst St
Woolf, Laurence Sinclair	Mar 10/09	Private
Aschaiek, Ytschak	Mar 11/09	95 Alameda Circle

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Coast to Coast

Everyday relations are chilly

Continued from page 1

Rabbi Scheier said this is not unusual. Almost 350 anti-Semitic or anti-Zionist articles have run in the Venezuelan media over the past year.

The Jews that Rabbi Scheier met also feel their everyday relations with fellow citizens have become chilly, and they feel isolated. They reminisced about a time not many years ago when they enjoyed warm relations with non-Jews. The Jewish students even played sports with local Muslim children.

The arrests of 11 suspects, including seven police officers, that were made after the Jan. 31 attack on the Tiferet Israel Synagogue was only for the sake of appearances to the world, Rabbi Scheier thinks.

Despite Chavez's denial that he is anti-Semitic and that the government is behind the incidents at Jewish institutions, Rabbi Scheier believes Chavez "clearly does not like Jews" and with his "messianic ambitions," he is a dangerous figure.

Rabbi Scheier is calling on the Canadian government to register an official protest with the Venezuelan government, condemn the Venezuelan government in international forums, and demand an independent investigation of the attacks on the Jewish community. Canada should also consider economic sanctions against Venezuela, he said.

He noted that the declaration of the international parliamentary conference on anti-Semitism, held last month in London, England, calls on governments to respond to violations of the rights of Jews everywhere.

Rabbi Scheier said he has spoken with his local MP for Westmount-Ville Marie, Liberal Marc Garneau, to discuss his concerns, and has asked for a meeting with Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon and Peter Kent, minister of state for foreign affairs (Americas).

Rabbi Scheier was a student of Rabbi Weiss' Yeshivat Chovevei Torah in New York. Rabbi Weiss, who heads the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale in the Bronx, is a veteran Jewish activist and the founder of Amcha. Rabbi Herzfeld is the spiritual leader of Ohev Sholom, known as the National Synagogue, in Washington. Both have warned recently in the Jewish press against staying silent about the perilous situation facing Jews in Venezuela.

The Jews, they say, are the most vulnerable in Chavez's campaign to intimidate any possible opposition to his regime.

Rabbi Scheier arrived in Caracas at midnight and left the following midnight. He was accompanied by private security for his entire stay.

In conversations with not only the Jewish community, but ordinary people such as hotel workers and airport staff, Rabbi Scheier said got the impression that Venezuela has become "a lawless society," with things getting so bad that people drive through red lights at night because to stop might invite criminals.

The three rabbis held a press conference while in Caracas, which was attended by representatives of local and foreign media, although Rabbi Scheier is not aware if any of it was reported.

They requested a meeting with a government official, but did not hear back from anyone, he said.

'Terry belonged to entire community'

Continued from page 1

"We gather here because Terry belonged to all, to the entire Ottawa Jewish community and beyond," Rabbi Garten said.

Rabbi Popky spoke of Schwarzfeld as a true Woman of Valour and outlined her qualities by quoting from the words of the prayer and applying them to how she had lived her life.

Originally from Regina, Schwarzfeld was the eldest child of the late Abel and Elaine Schwarzfeld – her mother and grandmother were both CHW members – she had lived in Vancouver and graduated from the University of British Columbia prior to moving to Ottawa with her husband, Stephen Cotsman.

The large number of people paying tribute to Schwarzfeld came from all areas of her very active life. In addition to many family members, there were friends and colleagues from CHW, including some who had travelled from Montreal and Toronto, and those who had accompanied her when she went hiking, cross-country skiing, dragon boat racing or any of her other favourite activities. Also in attendance were Glyne Murray, high commissioner to Canada for Barbados, and Leroy McClean, Barbados' consul general in Toronto.

Schwarzfeld's childhood friend, Toronto lawyer Ruth Mesbur, spoke movingly of their lifelong friendship, noting that even in their childhood games, Schwarzfeld always took a leadership role.

Other fond memories were shared by Schwarzfeld's sister Audrey, son Adam, and her CHW friend and colleague, Debbie Baylin.

Tributes to Schwarzfeld were read by Toby Yan, honorary national vice-president of CHW; Marla Dan, first vice-president of CHW who was appointed national president of CHW upon Schwarzfeld's death; and Helena Glazer, president of World WIZO.

In her memory, the organization has named a project in Acco, Israel, after her: the Terry Schwarzfeld Ottawa Day Care Centre. Donations to the centre can be made through the Ottawa office of CHW at 613-798-7644 or at www.chw.ca.

Schwarzfeld is survived by her husband, Stephen; her sons David, Adam and Simon; David's wife, Luana, and their son, Benjamin; and by her four siblings and their families.

Feature

A BITTER TALLY

Noam Schalit, father of Israeli captive soldier Gilad Schalit, spoke at a rally to mark 1,000 days of his son's captivity in Gaza. Gilad Schalit was abducted by Hamas in a cross border raid. Noam Schalit and his wife, Aviva, have ended a protest outside Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's residence.

[Uri Lenz/ FLASH90 photo]

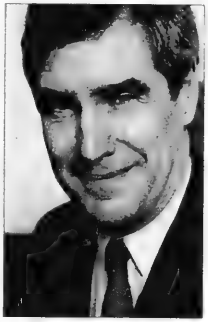
Coast to Coast

'You are not alone,' Ignatieff tells students

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Federal Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff told Jewish university students that he understands their pain when Israel is condemned unfairly, but he urged them to "not close down" and to reach out to those whose opinions differ from theirs – although he drew the line at those who accuse who equate Israel with apartheid.

Ignatieff was the guest at a March 13 Shabbat dinner hosted by the Hillel students association, part of a series of activities highlighting Israel that Hillel is sponsoring on campuses during March in the wake of Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW).



Michael Ignatieff

A week earlier, Ignatieff published an article in the National Post condemning IAW as unfair criticism because it portrays the very existence of the Jewish state as illegitimate.

He echoed that opinion at the dinner, saying that accusing Israel of practising apartheid is not only false but a "delegitimization" of the state, and therefore unacceptable.

He said it's the responsibility of university administrations to ensure that those students who support Israel can do so comfortably, and of elected officials to speak up, adding that writing his article "did not take much courage."

Ignatieff, a former academic, told the students that in a multicultural society, they must accept that there are going to be people who do not agree with them and that "intellectual freedom works both ways."

He said he realized this might be hard for young Jews to accept criticism of Israel when they bear the knowledge that their people were "incinerated" for being Jews.

In any event, Ignatieff said he doesn't believe Jewish students will turn inward, because the Jewish people have continued to be open to others, despite having been persecuted through their history.

His basic message, he said, is, "You are not alone."

Ultimately, he said his concern is that Canada "work" despite the challenges of a diverse population.

In other parts of his off-the-cuff talk, he deplored the "state-sanctioned anti-Semitism" of the Iranian and Venezuelan governments.

During a question period, he declined to outline any specific policies on Jewish settlements or the status of Jerusalem. He said that the resolution of those issues is up to the people directly involved, Palestinians and Israelis.

Canada can only "facilitate" the process, he said.

One student asked under what conditions the Liberal party would condemn an Israeli government action, and why he should vote Liberal instead of Conservative. Essentially, Ignatieff responded, the Liberal party's policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict has not changed in 50 or 60 years, which is that it favours a two-state solution.

Palestinians, like Israelis, must also feel secure within their final borders, he added.

Personally, he said, he has grappled with the problems of the Middle East for 40 years.

Ignatieff was clear that Canada must not deal with Hamas because of its terrorism, but it must help rebuild Gaza because it is not in Israel's interest to have a "devastated" neighbour where more radicalism can arise.

Ignatieff opened his talk by expressing a profound admiration for Jews' attachment to their traditions and for Jewish values. He deplored any expression of anti-Semitism.

About 200 people attended the dinner held at the downtown Opus Hotel, which was co-sponsored by Liberal Concordia, the Quebec-Israel Committee and National Jewish Campus Life. Also among the guests were Montreal Liberal MPs Irwin Cotler, Marc Garneau and Marlene Jennings, and Senator Yoine Goldstein.

In introducing Ignatieff, Samantha Banks, president of Hillel Montreal, said that many Hillel members "endure a constant struggle against those who seek to demonize the State of Israel. For those of us who choose to speak out in defence of the Jewish homeland, the importance of public support and encouragement from a Canadian leader of Mr. Ignatieff's status cannot be overstated.

"Through his outspoken criticism of IAW, Mr. Ignatieff has shown tremendous courage and extraordinary compassion in advocating for the right of Jewish students to enjoy a campus life free of harassment and intimidation."

A small group of protesters, identifying themselves as members of Young Jews for Social Justice, picketed outside the hotel before the dinner. They handed out flyers criticizing Ignatieff for supporting "the Israeli government's violations of basic Palestinian human rights" and "pandering to right-wing Jewish groups like B'nai Brith and the Quebec-Israel Committee, which don't represent all Jews."

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Coast to Coast

Slot-car racing at the eZone. From left, are Sam Roth, Hannah Weisdorf, Elliott Rubin, David Anzarouth, Haley Szereszewski and Rabbi Jennifer Gorman.

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Sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll was mifgash's theme

Compiled by CJN staff

Members of Eastern Canadian Region United Synagogue Youth gathered at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue recently for their annual Winter Mifgash.

This theme of this year's Winter Mifgash, held from March 13 to 15, was Sex, Drugs, Rock 'n' Roll: The Issues That Change Our World.

United Synagogue Youth (USY) is the high school affiliate of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ).

Among mifgash attendees were representatives from chapters of eastern Canadian region across Ontario and Quebec. Event co-chair Kylie Katz is part of the Beth Jacob USY chapter in Hamilton, and co-chair Simcha Walfish is a member of the Agudath Israel chapter in Ottawa.

As part of USY tradition, participants raised money for their Social Action Tikkun Olam (SATO) projects. SATO provides money to charitable causes USYers chose, as well as summer-program scholarships. Participants at Winter Mifgash raised money for Libi, an Israeli organization that provides support to members of the Israel Defence Forces, and for Feed the Children.

The teens also participated in a special program with Jewish Women's International, When Push Comes to Shove, dealing with dating violence. The teens learned about breaking stereotypes around dating and domestic violence and learned valuable skills for helping their peers and recognizing dangerous situations.

The topics discussed at the conference, including smoking, body image, homosexuality and abuse, were chosen by the USY board and co-chairs.

Rabbi Jennifer Gorman, director of Youth Activities for the Canadian Region of USCJ, said that "USY provides a safe space for Jewish teenagers to share issues and values that are important to them, learning without judgment."

It wasn't all learning, though. Participants were treated to a night out at the eZone, a sports and entertainment complex, plus they viewed a program on music censorship called Banned in Britain, created by the convention's co-chairs.

Coast to Coast

British MP banned in Canada

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Organizers of the tour that was to feature outspoken British MP George Galloway say they will launch a court challenge to overturn a decision by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) to bar the controversial figure from entering Canada.

Laith Marouf, national branches coordinator of Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, told Canadian Press that "our hope is the decision will be overturned in the courts when it actually looks at the merits of the decision of the government."

The Federal Court challenge was to be launched earlier this week. A spokesperson for Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney said the minister would not exercise his discretion to exempt Galloway from the CBSA decision to bar him as a security risk.

Marouf said that should legal efforts fail, Galloway supporters will attempt to accompany the MP over the border from the United States, where he is on a speaking tour.

"One way or another, we will bring George Galloway to Canada," Marouf said. "We have already been overwhelmed by messages of support, and we're currently planning a delegation of MPs, lawyers and activists to escort Mr. Galloway from the United States across the Canadian border. We plan to challenge this ban directly."

In a news release, James Clark, a spokesperson for the Toronto Coalition to Stop the War, called the decision to bar Galloway "a full frontal attack on free speech in Canada and one that all supporters of civil liberties must challenge. Kenney's ban is an unprecedented move to censor someone whose views are critical of our own government's foreign policy. We will not accept this ban, and we plan on defying it."

Kenney's spokesperson, Alykhan Velshi, said that "the minister will not give a special exemption from Canada's security laws to Mr. Galloway, nor will he provide special treatment to a man who brags about giving financial support to Hamas, a banned terrorist organization in Canada, or who offers sympathy for Canada's enemies in Afghanistan."

Canadian Jewish Congress and B'nai Brith Canada supported the government's position on the British MP, who was banished from Britain's governing Labour party in 2003 and now sits as a representative of the Respect party.

B'nai Brith said Galloway "glorifies terrorism" and "defends the very terrorists trying to kill Canadian forces in Afghanistan.

"By logical extension, those who support the pro-terrorist agenda of groups like Hamas and Hezbollah, whose avowed aim is the destruction of the Jewish state, should not be given public platforms to spew their vile message."

Congress CEO Bernie Farber said the decision to bar Galloway "is not a free speech issue. He is free to speak and say whatever he wants. It's easy to find everything he says on the Internet. This is completely about his support for terrorist organizations. He has said publicly that he raises money for terrorist organizations."

Farber said the CBSA "determined he would be here to raise money for terrorist organizations. That's what he does."

In an article on the Guardian website titled "Canada can't muzzle me," Galloway described Kenney's decision as "the way the right wing, last-ditch dead-enders of Bushism in Ottawa conduct their business."

He called NATO policy in Afghanistan "a profound mistake," "a blunder" and "with increased regularity it is a crime."

Galloway was scheduled to speak at four events in Canada: on March 30 in Toronto, March 31 in Mississauga, April 1 in Montreal and April 2 in Ottawa.

YIDDISH CORNER

Edited by: ALEK SILVER

ייִדיש־ווינקל

רעדאַגירט פֿון: אַלעק סילווער

אויסצוגן פון בוך „אין שפּיגל פון דער וועלט"

פֿון גרוניאַ סלוצקי־קאַהן

אַפּריל, אַפּריל

נעווידמעט די העלדישע ייִדישע קעמפּער אין וואַרשעווער געטאָ־אופֿשטאַנד.

אַ שלעכטער ביסטו, אַפּריל,
דאָס וויסן מיר שוין לאַנג.
מיר נעדענקען דיך, אַפּריל,
אַזוי פיל יאָרן דערמאָנען מיר דעם אויפֿשטאַנד
אין וואַרשעווער געטאָ, די ייִנגע העלדן,
דעם קאַמף מיט שונא אויף לעבן און טויט.

דו האָסט דעם שונא צוגעהאָלפֿן,
די ייִדישע קעמפּער מיט רעגנס און ווינטן געפֿלאָגט,
ווען דער שונא האָט די העלדן פון ברענעדיקן
וואַרשעווער געטאָ געיאָגט.
מיט פּייער און שווערד געקוילעט די העלדן,
געזוכט אין די בונקערס, געזוכט אין די גרי־בער,
אין צעשטערטע, פֿאַרוואָרפֿענע, ברענענדע שטיבער,
אפֿילו נעפּינען זיי אונטער דער ערד.
טאָג און נאַכט האָט דאָס פּייער געבריענט,
טאָג און נאַכט.

שמוציק זענען דיינע הענט, אַפּריל, שמוציק.
וויידער לאָזט די זונעלע נישט שיינען,
פּריייַן זיך מיט אונדז אין איינעם,
פּייַערן דעם יום־טוב פּסח, דעם יום־טוב
פון פֿרייַהייט, דעם יום־טוב פון פּרייד.

גיסט און גיסט אַ קאַלטן רעגן,
יאָגט דעם ווינט איבער די וועגן.
פֿאַרשטערסט אונדז דעם יום־טוב,
דאָס ביסעלע שיין,
טיף אין דיין בייַנער קריכסטו אַריין.
דו לאָכסט און לאַכסט, און מאַכסט שפּאַס,
פֿאַרשפּרייסט שנאה און האָס
אויף דער ייִדישער נאַס.

איין טאָג איז דיר צו בושעוען געבליבן,
איין טאָג . . . דאָס רעדעלע דרייט זיך, אַפּריל,
וועסט אין דיין „קרוין־שטול" לאַנג זיך שוין
ניט ווינן, דער צאָרטער מאַי וועט דיך באַזיגן.
און קנאַפּן וועלן זיך באַוויזן,
און אוירוארעמען וועט די זון די ערד,
די זאָל אונדז וידער קענען שפּייַזן.

דער פּייער וועט באַלד אָקערן און זייַען,
די נאַטור וועט אויפלעבן, זיך פּריייַען,
וואָס די איז פּטור געוואָרן פון דיר, אַפּריל.
זענען געבושעוועט, זענען פֿאַרשאַפּט אונדז ליידן,
זענען, אַפּריל, זענען . . .

איך דאַנק דיר, גאָט

איך דאַנק דיר, גאָט,
האָסט מיר געגעבן יאָרן —
איך האָב דערלעבט צו זען אַ דריטן דור.
עס שוועקט מיך ניט די עלטער,
ניט די גרויע האָר.

וויידער בליען בלומען אין מיין גאָרטן,
וויידער קלינגט אַ פּריילעכער געזאַנג.
אוּן לעבן וועל איך אייביק אין מיין לידּ,
אוּן לעבן וועל איך אייביק אין זיין קלאַנג.

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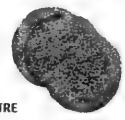

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Palestinian school texts poison minds, says PMW founder

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Itamar Marcus, the founder and director of Palestinian Media Watch, will tell Canadian parliamentarians in Ottawa this week that school texts produced by the Palestinian Authority are poisoning the minds of some one million children and adolescents and thereby undermining the prospects for peace with Israel.

In a bipartisan event arranged by Liberal MP and former federal justice minister Irwin Cotler, Marcus will say that PA school books in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip portray the Arab-Israeli conflict as a religious and existential struggle rather than as a territorial one.

In an interview in Toronto last week, Marcus said that the only chance for long-term peace is if the PA presents the conflict strictly in territorial terms.

"Then we can negotiate over borders," noted Marcus, whose organization monitors the PA's media and education system.

Marcus, who was invited here by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, said the PA's skewed presentation of the Arab-Israeli dispute stands as "the greatest impediment to peace."

He said he will tell MPs that Canada – a financial contributor to the PA – should not fund "hate education" and thus perpetuate the conflict.

According to Marcus, Palestinian school texts in every grade deny Israel's right to exist and demonize Israel.

"This creates hatred," he said. "Why would Palestinians want to make peace with Israel?"

He cited a sentence in a grade 12 text, Arabic Language, Analysis and Criticism: "Palestine's war ended with a catastrophe that is unprecedented in history, when the Zionist gangs stole Palestine and expelled its people from their cities, their lands and their homes, and established the State of Israel."

Marcus also cited a PA educational television program on geography recently that described Eilat, Haifa, Ashkelon and Ashdod as "Palestinian ports," Mt. Meron as the highest mountain in Palestine and the Sea of Galilee as a Palestinian lake.

Nor is there a map of Israel in any Palestinian school book, he added.

"The PA is building a picture of a world in which Israel does not exist," charged Marcus, who was appointed in the late 1990s by then-Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to represent Israel at a trilateral forum on incitement that was attended as well by delegates from the PA and the United States.

Itamar Marcus

Accusing the PA of repackaging anti-Israel messages in its latest batch of school texts, Marcus nonetheless acknowledged that the PA has removed "viciously anti-Semitic" passages from them.

He pointed out that PA texts, which also accuse Israel of inflicting genocide on the Palestinians, are used by the current Hamas government in Gaza.

Fatah, the largest faction in the PA, has grown more extreme, he warned, citing an interview with former Fatah security commander Mohammed Dahlan.

Dahlan, in a reference to Fatah's ongoing bitter rivalry with Hamas, told PA TV on March 16: "I want to say for the thousandth time, in my own name and in the name of all my fellow members of the Fatah movement: we do not demand that the Hamas movement recognize Israel. On the contrary, we demand of the Hamas movement not to recognize Israel, because the Fatah movement does not recognize Israel even today."

Dahlan went on to comment that the PA recognized Israel "not out of conviction or sincerity, but in order to receive the needed help of the international community."

Marcus expressed optimism that Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister-designate, will address the issue of Palestinian incitement after he takes office. "I expect to work closely with him," he said.

Contrary to statements made by Israel's outgoing prime minister, Ehud Olmert, Marcus claimed that Israel has no peace partner in PA President and Fatah member Mahmoud Abbas.

"Fatah is not yet a peace partner, because its leadership is producing these inflammatory school texts."

Marcus criticized Olmert for not taking up this issue.

"Some Israeli leaders say they'll deal with it in the future. We say we have to deal with it now."

In closing, Marcus – a resident of the West Bank settlement of Efrat – suggested that Israel should keep areas of the West Bank, such as Gush Etzion, where substantial numbers of Jews have lived since the Six Day War.

But striking a conciliatory tone, he said, "If there was someone on the other side we can talk to, and if we knew that the [West Bank] would not be used as a springboard to attack Israel and Ben-Gurion Airport, we would be very forthcoming on territorial issues."

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נינה שנהב

"הבאנו את התמונות מהמסיבה!" קורא הבן שלי, כשהוא נכנס הביתה. הוא מושיט לי מעטפת צילום מלאה בתמונות מיום ההולדת שזה עתה חגגנו לו. אני נירגשת. המון זמן לא הצטלמנו. אני חושבת שאולי פעם, פעמיים בקנדה. פעם, כשירד שלג, והיינו המומים מנס הטבע שעין אדם שנולד במדבר לא ראתה, ופעם שנייה, כשהקטנה ניצחה באיזה משחק. באותה הפעם גם נשברה המצלמה, ומאז לא הצטלמנו.

אני פותחת את המעטפה ונאנחת בשמחה למראה משפחתי החמודה. אני מצלמת אותם נהדר. הנה שלושתם ליד עץ, הנה בקניון, הנה שני הילדים שלי ניצבים ליד דודה שמנה וחיוכנית, הנה שוב אותה דודה שמנה מחבקת את הילדים שלי... הנה הפרה הזקנה מחבקת את הבעל שלי...רגע! מי זו הדודה השמנה הזו?!

מאיר מחבק אותי בשאני בוכה. "את לא כל כך שמנה, ניני," הוא מנסה. "באמת. רק קצת במותניים, בירכיים, בישבן ובפנים. אבל זה הכל."

אני מביטה בתמונות שלי ולא מאמינה. תבינו, אני תמיד הייתי החתיכה של החבר'ה! זאת שכל הגברים היו מתלהבים למראיה, למורת רוחו של בעלי הסבלן, זאת שהתלבשה הדוק ופרובוקטיבי, זאת שהבנות שנאו! אני רוצה שוב שהבנות ישנאו אותי!

"אולי שלושים, מקסימום ארבעים פאונד עלית." מנחם אותי בעלי, ומוסיף בנדיבות: "בקילוגרמים זה יישמע לך פחות."

ביוני אנחנו נוסעים לישראל. מה ינידו עלי? מה ירכלו? זאת אומרת אני יודעת מה ירכלו. מה יהיה?

למחרת, אני נרשמת לחוג הרזייה במתנ"ס הקרוב. עוד אף פעם לא הייתי בחוג כזה, ואני מסוקרנת. שמונה דוגמניות צמרת נכנסות לחדר, עוד שלוש נשים רגילות (רזות יותר ממני) ושתי שמנות. אחת מהן המדריכה, השנייה, אני.

אנחנו שותות קפה ומדברות על הצרות שלנו. אחר כך השיחה נסובה למתכונים. המדריכה מציעה תבשיל שנשמע נורא, אבל בהפסקה אנו מתנחמות בכך שבתוספת כמה כפות מיונז, בצל מטוגן וקוביות גבינה צהובה, התבשיל יהיה אכיל. גם בקינוח יש בעייה מסויימת, אבל ניתן לתמיין אותו בליווי רוסב שוקולד סמיך.

שכחתי לספר שגם נשקלים. תודה לאל, ממש לא ברור לי כמה פאונדים זה קילו (אני מקווה שבסביבות ארבעה, חמישה), ובבקשה שאף נשמה טובה לא תשלח לי באימייל מספר מדוייק. אין לי מושג כמה אני שוקלת, אבל אני יודעת שבערך כפול מידידותי הרגילות, פי שלוש משמונה הדוגמניות (ביחד), ואני ממש רזה יחסית למדריכה.

אחרי זמן מה בקבוצה (שתי פגישות), אני מסיקה שהתכנית לא בשבילי. אמנם מאיר צוחק עלי שאחם ביזבזתי כסף, אבל כשאני מורה לו שאחר על גבי לבן (הג'ינס הכהה על הבטן הלבנבנה שלי) שרק עליתי במשקל, הוא מרפה.

אני נכנסת לקבוצה מסוגרת שקוראת לעצמה "אכלני יתר כפייתיים", ומייד מרגישה כמו מסוממת חשרת אונים. החבר'ה פה הם כולם רזים בלי יוצא מן הכלל, דיכאונים על סף התאבדות, והחלק הנחמד היחיד הוא, שכל פעם שאני פותחת את הפה לוידוי קטן וחכרחי ("הייי, אני נינה, ואני אכלנית יתר כפייתית"), מריעים לכפייתיות שלי באהבה ללא תנאים, וגם מחבקים אותי הרבה. מצד שני, מרוב לשמוע כמה הבחור האנורקטי שלצידי חסא, חלל קערה שלמה של נבטים חלטיים (אחרי שהחבר שלו עזב אותו לאנורוחת), כל מה שבא לי לעשות זה לרוץ החוצה בצעקה צרודה ולהתנפל על דוכן הנקניקיות הקרוב.

אחרי שני ניסיונות נוספים, ועוד זוג מכנסיים שקטן עלי. אני מחליטה ללכת על דיאטה מאוד פופולארית, מהטלוויזיה.

בטלוויזיה ראיתי איזו שחרחורת זקנה שצועקת שהיא נורא צעירה, ומראה תמונות מעברה חשמנמן, הצעיר והיפה. מראים גם תמיך בלונדיני שמביא לה הביתה אוכל, ונגמר עניין. מרזים.

קודם כל, אין אמת בפירסום. לי דווקא מביא את הארוחות אחד ממש לא תמיך, בטח שלא בלונדיני (אין הרבה בלונדינים בסין).

אבל חוץ מזה הכל בסדר. האוכל טעים. אני שמה במיקרו, אוכלת, שמחה, ואחרי שבועיים רואה ששמנתי רצת. לאף אחד אין מושג למה. הרי הכל כך מדוייק במאזן הקלוריי של כל ארוחה. "תתבעי אותם!" מייעץ הבן שלי, שיהיה עורך דין, כשיגדל.

"נורא מוזר." מסכים מאיר. אני שותקת. נכון, אני אוכלת בדיוקות את מה שהשליח מביא. עד 12 בצהריים. אחר כך אני פנוה למקרר הביתי, ואוכלת כרגיל...

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Abbas prefers security fence to killings: expert

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas told former prime minister Ariel Sharon before Israel built the West Bank security fence that he preferred it over targeted killings as a way of fighting terror, a former Israeli Defence Forces military prosecutor said here earlier this month

Amos Guiora – a former Israeli Defence Forces military prosecutor in the West Bank Military Court, as well as a former judge in the Gaza Strip Military Court and legal adviser to the Gaza Strip military commander – spoke about Israel's position in the Middle East in a talk at the Canadian Mennonite University on March 8.

Amos Guiora

While approximately 200 members of the Mennonite community came to hear anti-Israel speaker Jeff Halper on Jan. 25, only about 25 members of the Mennonite community came to hear Guiora.

Having been personally involved in the legal and policy aspects of Israeli counterterrorism efforts, Guiora said that before Sharon authorized the building of the security fence, "he went to Abbas" and said that Israel could conduct "more targeted killings" of terrorists or it could "build the fence," and Abbas told Sharon he "preferred" the fence.

Guiora, now a law professor the University of Utah, added: "The fence is effective… for the Palestinian Authority. It enables them to come to Israel and say we've minimized Palestinian terrorism into Israel."

Guiora also said that "Sharon's plan had been to release [jailed Fatah leader] Marwan Barghouti," who has been convicted of murdering Israeli civilians in terror attacks and is in an Israeli prison. Guiora said that Sharon was willing to release him, with the idea he would eventually become PA president, because the head of the PA would have to be "a ruthless tough leader," capable of controlling the West Bank. In Guiora's view, Abbas, who he said he has met, is not tough enough for the position.

Guiora added that although it has been "kept a secret," there have been some Israeli Arabs who have served in the IDF, "not in desk jobs, but in combat."

According to Guiora, the Palestinian Authority leadership understands that if it wants a state in the West Bank, it needs to conduct itself "diametrically differently than Hamas." He said that Palestinians in the West Bank "took to the streets only once" during Israel's recent Gaza operation, because they know "better than anyone else that Hamas has brought them nothing."

Guiora said that although he had been a "longtime supporter of a two-state solution" who had voted for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in 2006, he no longer thinks a two-state solution is on the horizon, especially given Hamas' control of Gaza.

"Rather than build a liberal society" after Israel pulled out of Gaza in 2005, "all Hamas has done is lob 600 missiles into Israel in the last three years," Guiora said, adding that the "Palestinians are masters of their own victimization."

In considering the extensive terror infrastructure Hamas has built and the level of support Hamas enjoys in Gaza, Guiora said people need to "think long and hard" about who were really "the victims" of Israel's military operation in Gaza.

Speaking of the wider region, Guiora said that once President Hosni Mubarak is no longer leader of Egypt, his son, Jamal, will likely take over, but it's an open question "whether the [Egyptian] army will be loyal to him, and whether he will be as ruthless [as his father] toward Islamic extremism."

Guiora, whose recent books include Fundamentals of Counterterrorism and Global Perspectives on Counterterrorism, said Russia's support of Iran is "extremely concerning."

He added, "Does [Russian Prime Minister Vladimir] Putin not realize that what can be aimed one way [toward Israel] can also be aimed the other way [toward Russia]?

He also said that "Iranian threats are getting stronger every day" and "we in Israel believe everything they [the Iranian government officials] say" when they threaten the Jewish state.

Guiora was unsure, however, whether Israel would decide to strike Iran. He added that he is also "losing sleep" over the fact that Pakistan has "100 nuclear warheads" and, in his view, "the regime isn't stable."

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Passover Food Ideas

Chocolate Passover birthday cake is easy to make

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

My son, my daughter, my brother-in-law and at least four of our young cousins were born in March or April, so there's always an excuse for us to have a birthday cake at the seder.

Although I enjoy preparing elaborate desserts once in a while, it makes more sense for me to use easy recipes now that my husband and I have begun hosting our 40-person family seder.

A couple of years ago, I found two online recipes – one for a brownie cake, the other for a chocolate glaze – that I adapted slightly and combined to create a Passover birthday cake.

The cake ingredients are mixed in one bowl, a bonus on Passover, when many recipes call for eggs to be separated and beaten in two bowls.

Once the cake is baked and cooled, it should be cut in half into two equal rectangles and frozen until you are ready to assemble it.

Instead of using icing to write "Happy Birthday" on the cake, I inscribe a message with melted white chocolate on an upside-down chocolate bar. Prepare the chocolate bar first, so you can position it before the glaze has set.

I use a piece of wax paper, folded and taped into a cone with a small hole at the bottom, as an "icing bag" for the melted white chocolate. It's helpful to practise writing on a piece of wax paper before attempting to write on the chocolate bar.

Continued on page 35

This Passover birthday cake is easy to make, and goes well with chocolate-dipped strawberries. *[Frances Kraft photo]*

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Small cake serves crowd

Continued from page 34

A toothpick is handy to remove tiny bits of extra white chocolate if the writing is not as neat as you would like.

The cake looks small, but it will feed more people than you expect, especially if you are serving other desserts as well. It's very sweet, so large servings aren't necessary.

PASSOVER BROWNIE CAKE

5 eggs
2 1/2 c. sugar
1 1/4 c. oil
1 1/4 c. cake meal
1/2 c. unsweetened cocoa powder

Preheat oven to 325. In large bowl, beat eggs and sugar. Add oil. Mix in cake meal and cocoa. Pour batter into greased 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 325 for about 35 minutes. Underbake so it will be moist. Check at about 30 minutes.

CHOCOLATE GLAZE

1/3 c. sugar
1/3 c. cocoa
3 tbsp. hot water

Combine and stir well. Yield: 1/2 cup.

DECORATION

1 6-oz. Passover chocolate bar, plus four squares of chocolate, divided into two double squares
white chocolate or white chocolate chips
strawberry or raspberry jam or jelly
strawberries
approximately 3 to 6 oz. chocolate or chocolate chips, or more, for dipping strawberries

TO ASSEMBLE THE CAKE:

1. Put one cake layer on a serving plate, top side up. The cake should still be frozen or semi-frozen – soft enough to cut when you put the second layer on, but frozen enough that it's easier to glaze.
2. Place four wide strips of wax paper under each of the four sides of the cake, overlapping the corners and extending each one outward onto the plate. When you glaze the cake, the excess glaze will go onto the wax paper, and the plate will stay clean.
3. Spread cake top with jam or jelly.
4. Top with other half of cake, top side down.
5. Trim sides of cake if not even, using a long serrated knife or a sharp paring knife.
6. Gently brush off excess crumbs. Pour glaze over the cake, and use a spatula or long knife to smooth glaze along top and sides, covering the cake as completely as possible.
7. To position the chocolate bar, decide where you want it, and angle the top (the long side above the writing) upward so it will be easier to see.
8. Position a double square of chocolate under the back of the chocolate bar to support it, and then use a second double square to raise the chocolate bar a little higher. Use the glaze as a "glue" between the pieces of chocolate.
9. Once the glaze has had time to set, use a knife to separate the glaze from the bottom of the cake where it runs onto the wax paper, and carefully remove the wax paper strips.
10. At serving time, arrange chocolate-covered strawberries (prepared in advance) around the cake.

This Passover, ask a 5th question:
Why cook when you can cater?

Seder plate
Matzo
Old fashioned dill pickles
Tzimmes with fresh prunes, yams & carrots
Gefilte fish made with white fish & salmon

CHOOSE ONE
Cabbage borscht with tender beef flunken
OR
Homemade matzo ball soup

CHOOSE ONE
Farm fresh baby spinach salad with red onions, toasted almonds, mandarin oranges, topped with a citrus vinaigrette
OR
Traditional coleslaw

CHOOSE TWO
Brisket served with gravy au jus
OR
Pickle Barrel famous B.B.Q. chicken
OR
Baked salmon with an orange miso glaze
OR
Grilled salmon with a sweet teriyaki glaze

CHOOSE ONE
Garlic infused mashed potatoes with caramelized onions
OR
Farfel with sautéed button & shiitake mushrooms
OR
Roasted mini red potatoes with fresh herbs & Kosher salt

CHOOSE ONE
Green beans with caramelized onions & toasted almonds
OR
Candied roasted root vegetables topped with crushed toasted pecans

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Chicken supreme $7.99 PC
CHOOSE FROM avocado salsa • hoisin & shiitake mushroom • Thai chili orange
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Baby spinach & brie cheese salad SERVES 15 $39.99
Mixed antipasto salad SERVES 15 $39.99
Candied roasted root vegetables topped with crushed toasted pecans SERVES 10 $19.99
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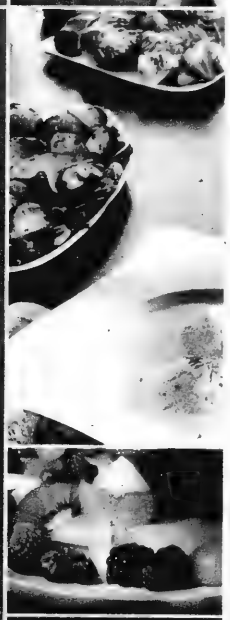

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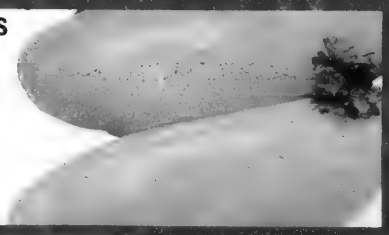

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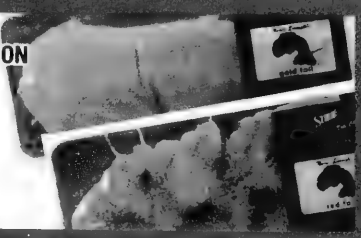

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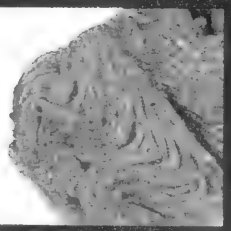

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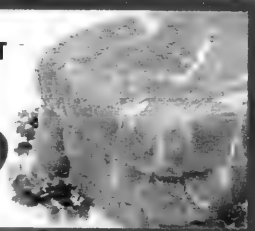

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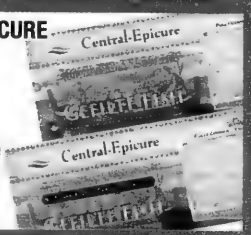

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Passover Food Ideas

Plan and cook your seder meal in advance

By DENISE PHILLIPS
Special to The CJN

Seder night is a great family occasion, and planning ahead is the answer to a perfect evening. The recipes in this menu will not spoil should the seder go on longer than anticipated. Salmon and ginger fish balls can be prepared ahead and so too, can the beef tagine. To complete the meal, a fat-free orange and almond cake will freeze so that last minute preparations can be reduced to a minimum.

SALMON AND GINGER FISH BALLS

Boiled fish balls are a popular recipe. Instead of making them with a mixture of white fish, I have used fresh salmon with ginger. It's a delicious combination flavoured with scallions and fresh dill. They can be eaten hot, warm or cold and will not spoil if made in advance or if left in warm water while the seder service seems to have gone on a little longer than anticipated. You can vary the size from cocktail to larger main course portions; however, I recommend that when cooking, you should keep them all to one size so that they finish cooking at the same time.

In addition, they are extremely healthy, as there is no added fat and they are very low in cholesterol; only egg white is used to combine the mixture.

I like to serve them with *chrain*, beetroot relish or mayonnaise with salad, or hot with vegetables. Preparation time, 15 minutes, cooking time, 15 minutes.

2 lb. fresh salmon, skinned and cubed
1 in. fresh ginger root, peeled and finely chopped
2 tbsp. fresh dill – or use parsley, chives or cilantro if preferred or more available
5 scallions, peeled and trimmed
2 egg whites
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Fish Stock
1 bay leaf
2 peppercorns
4 cups water – or enough to cover the fish
2 tsp. salt
garnish: 2 lemons – cut into slices

Place the salmon, ginger, dill and scallions in the food processor. Whizz until smooth. Season very well as they need plenty of flavour and the addition of egg white weakens the seasoning.

While the food processor is running, slowly add the egg white. Remove the mixture and place in a dish. With wet hands take 1 to 2 tablespoons of mixture – size according to preference – and roll into balls.

Place all the stock ingredients in a large, deep saucepan. Bring to a boil and reduce heat so that stock is simmering. Carefully drop the fish balls into the simmering stock, cover with a lid and cook for about 5 minutes. They are cooked when they rise to the surface.

Using a slotted spoon, remove and transfer to a serving plate. To serve the stylish way, garnish with sprigs of fresh dill and slices of lemon. Serves 6.

BEEF TAGINE WITH PRUNES

This is the ideal recipe for seder night, as it can be cooking slowly while the service is taking place, or alternatively, frozen and reheated. Large numbers are easier to cater for and serving is simple. I like to accompany this recipe with either sliced roasted potatoes or mashed potatoes. Dried fruits are plentiful in the kosher supermarkets during Pesach and this dish makes good use of them and allows a small amount of beef to go a long way. Preparation time: 20 minutes, cooking time: 2-1/2 hours.

2 lb. chuck beef steak cut into cubes
3 tbsp. fine matzah meal
2 tbsp. vegetable or olive oil
4 onions, peeled and sliced
2 cups dried prunes, stones removed
1 in. ginger root, peeled and grated
2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 1/2 cups sultana raisins
1 cup red wine
2 cups beef stock
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Garnish
sprigs of fresh cilantro
3 tbsp. whole almonds
3 tbsp. pistachio nuts

Continued on page 38

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Low fat pareve cake is a healthy choice

Continued from page 37

For the mashed potatoes
4 lb. large potatoes, peeled and roughly chopped
3 tbsp. margarine
1 tbsp. olive oil
pinch of nutmeg
freshly ground sea salt to taste

Heat the oil in a large deep skillet. Fry the beef until browned. Add the onions, cinnamon, ginger, matzah meal, salt and pepper to the skillet and continue to fry for a further 5 minutes. Add the red wine, stock, prunes and sultanas. Bring to a boil. Cover and reduce the heat to simmer for 2 hours.

Preheat oven to 400. Place the almonds on a baking tray. Put them in the oven and toast until golden. This will take about 10 minutes but keep an eye on them as they will burn!

Cook the potatoes until soft. Drain. Use a fork or potato ricer to mash the potatoes. Return the potato to the saucepan. Add the margarine, olive oil, nutmeg and salt. Stir and season to taste.

To serve the stylish way, place a generous helping of mashed potato on a warm plate and pour over an individual helping of beef stew. Garnish with sprigs of cilantro and toasted whole almonds and pistachio nuts. Serves 6.

ORANGE AND ALMOND CAKE

It's always difficult to find suitable low fat desserts that are not just fruit. This recipe has no fat and transforms some every day ingredients into something very delicious. The secret of its divine flavour is in the simmering of 2 whole oranges for 2 hours and then incorporating them into the mixture. This cake recipe also ticks all the boxes for a flexible cake, it can be made in advance, it's pareve and it's ideal for Pesach. Preparation time: 20 minutes. Cooking time: 3 hours 30 minutes plus cooling.

2 large oranges
1 1/4 cups sugar
1 cup ground almonds
1 tsp. almond extract
6 eggs
1 tsp. Passover baking powder
3 tbsp. of split almonds

Put the oranges in a pan and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil, turn down the heat and simmer for 2 hours. Top up with more water if they start to boil dry.

Line an 8-in. cake tin with non-stick baking parchment paper.

Preheat the oven to 150. Remove the oranges from the water. Using a sharp knife, carefully remove the outer orange layer. Cut orange in half discarding any pips. Place in the food processor with the sugar, eggs, ground almonds, almond extract and baking powder. Blitz until smooth.

Transfer the mixture into the prepared cake tin and sprinkle the almonds over the top.

Bake in the preheated oven for 1 hour and 30 minutes, covering with foil half-way through should it start to burn on top.

Leave cake to cool and then cut into slices. Serves 8 to 10.

To serve the stylish way, dust the plate with some confectioner's sugar and serve the cake with orange sorbet or Passover ice cream.

Denise Phillips, a columnist based in London, England, is the author of four cookbooks. Her latest, New Flavours of the Jewish Table, is available in an American edition from her website www.jewishcookery.com.

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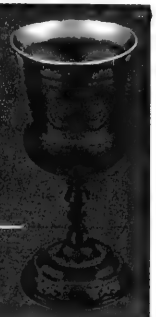

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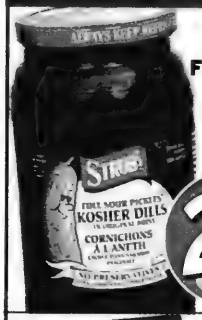

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Passover Food Ideas

Food memories of Passover

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

For me, the best recipes are the ones that stand the test of time, favourite family recipes that are passed down from generation to generation. I have very vivid memories of the Passover of my childhood.

My mother would buy at least 15 dozen eggs, and boxes and boxes of matzah, farfel, cake meal and potato starch. Mom would make chopped liver, homemade gefilte fish that she ground herself (she would never use a frozen leg of gefilte fish, God forbid), and her matzah balls that were as puffy as clouds. She made farfel kugels, matzah meal latkes, roast chicken, Pesach potato knishes and sweet carrot tzimmes with a kneidl. My mother never made brisket because she hated it. For dessert, there was always Pesach komish broit, fruit compote, baked apples, jelly roll and light-as-a-cloud sponge cake that used almost a dozen eggs. Leftover sponge cake would be sliced, dipped in egg and transformed into French toast for breakfast. Fried matzah was fried in either schmaltz or butter and no one seemed to worry about cholesterol levels!

We complain about how difficult it is to prepare for Passover, despite the fact that today's modern kitchens are outfitted with a wide variety of appliances to ease preparation. Disposable foil containers can be used for brisket, turkey and kugels, and many people use fancy disposable paper plates and cutlery for large crowds, making cleanup a snap.

Miami ribs

A huge variety of prepared and packaged foods makes the task easier for those who don't want to cook or don't have the time because they work full time. Supermarket displays showcase a wide selection of exotic fruits and vegetables from all over the world. So many choices!

Caterers advertise their Passover menus weeks in advance for those who are looking for easier options. Other people close up their kitchens and go on a Passover cruise or make reservations at a hotel offering a special seder menu, to avoid the task of cleaning and cooking for Pesach.

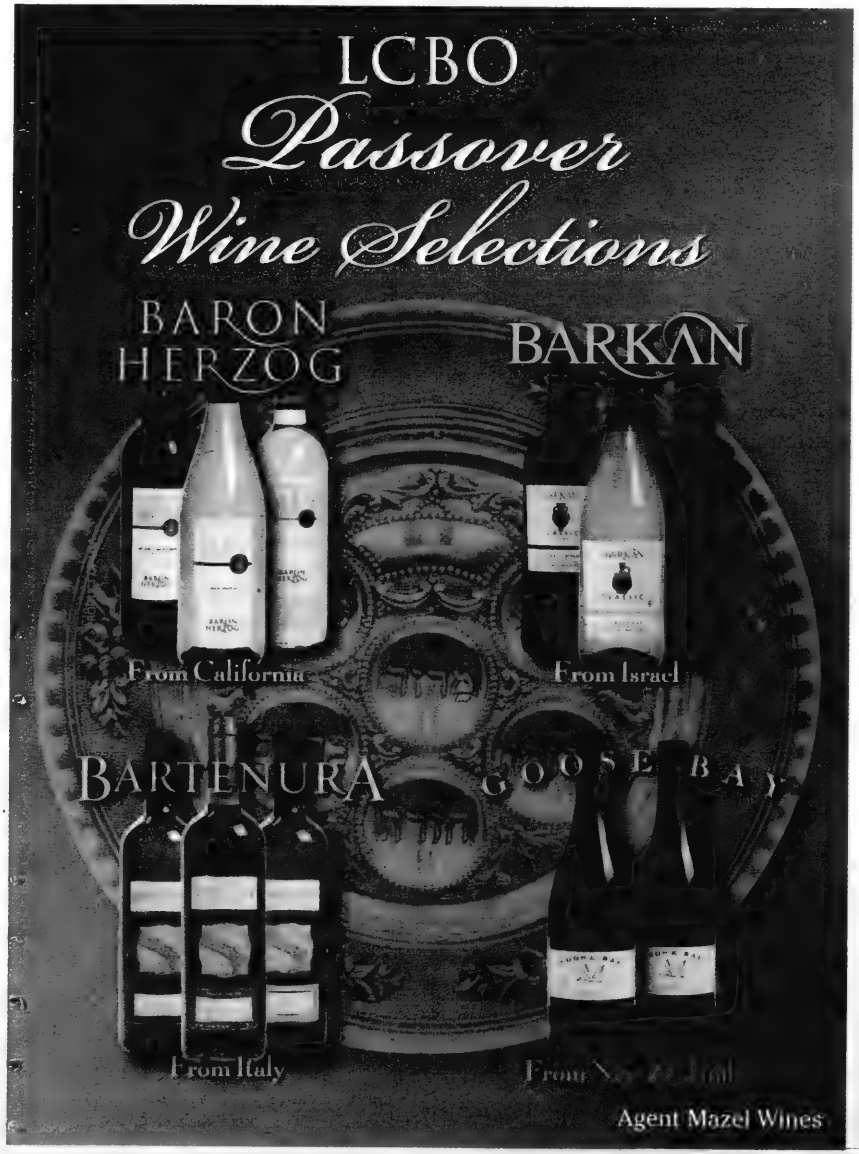
You can imagine how fascinated I was when I read this detailed description of Pesach in Israel in the '30s from Sara Finkel's wonderful cookbook: Simply Delicious: Winning Recipes for Every Day and Holidays (Targum). I've also included her delicious recipe for Pesach Vegetable Casserole from her book.

Finkel writes: "I have often wondered how my Aunt Esther, who lived with her family in Jerusalem about seven or eight decades ago, managed to prepare for Pesach, not only for her family but for the countless guests who came from many miles around.

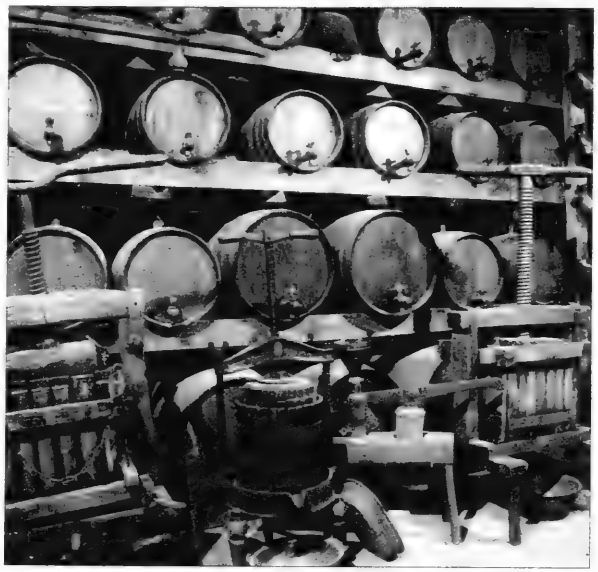
"There were no refrigerators, gas ranges or freezers, not to mention food processors, blenders or electric mixers. No one even knew the meaning of the word microwave oven, nor could they in their wildest imagination dream of either an electric dishwasher or a clothes dryer. Laundry was done in a washtub in the yard over a scrub board. In order for the family to have clean clothing and clean tablecloths to last the entire holiday, it had to be done on the day before Pesach…

"Staples were scarce and rations were meagre. Fish was considered a luxury, and the lowly potato was expensive. Potatoes were grated, drained and dried and made into potato starch. It was a special treat for a family to get an apple or even an orange. Few vegetables were around – eggplant,

Continued on page 42



Passover Food Ideas



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~ or ~

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~ or ~

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~ or ~

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Recipes that stand the test of time

Continued from page 40

squash and maybe some tomatoes – they were all prepared in many different ways to provide variety to meals and sometimes to replace chicken or fish.

"Serious preparations for Pesach began with the approach of the Sukkot season when plump, juicy grapes ripened. Because wine was not yet commercially produced, it was made by almost every household. With feet scrubbed clean, everyone, including the children, happily trampled the juice from the grapes. Sugar was added and the whole lot was poured into barrels to ferment. The results were sweet red wine, white wine and grape juice.

"Even schmaltz was prepared on Chanukah for Pesach because geese were fattest at that time of year. Griebene with matzah and a glass of tea was a special evening meal they ate with relish. Russel borsht, left in barrels to age, was relished during Pesach, and eaten along with a plate of boiled potatoes."

* * *

Here are some special dishes that my "Pan Pals" from near and afar will be making for the seders this year. Enjoy in good health and have a happy and delicious Passover!

PESACH VEGETABLE CASSEROLE

From Sara Finkel, Jerusalem

This light vegetable casserole is a welcome change from the high-protein dishes that dominate the Pesach menu.

1 large onion, diced
1 stalk celery, diced
1/2 cup sliced mushrooms
5 tbsp. olive oil
3 to 4 carrots, grated
3/4 cup matzah meal
16 oz. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
3 eggs, beaten
1 1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

Saute onions, celery and mushrooms in oil until tender. Remove from heat. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour mixture into well-greased loaf pan and bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for 45 minutes. Serves 10 to 12.

* * *

Pamela Reiss of Winnipeg is the author of Soup: A Kosher Collection (Whitecap). Trained in her parents' catering company, Desserts Plus, Reiss loves nothing better than to dish up kosher fusion dishes that draw people together in celebration of good food and good company. Her recipe for Passover Miami Ribs from her personal recipe collection is an excellent example of her culinary creativity. When I asked about the availability of black currant jam, she said: "778 makes it for Passover, although grape jam would make a fine substitute. And Lieber or Pereg have a wide variety of Passover spices."

PASSOVER MIAMI RIB

From Pamela Reiss, Winnipeg

Combining black currant jam and tomato paste in a sauce may sound unusual, but the final flavour is outstanding. These taste even better if they're made a day ahead and reheated before serving.

2 lbs. short ribs (Miami cut)
salt and pepper
2 tbsp. olive oil
1 small onion, peeled and finely chopped
2 large garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp. sweet red paprika mixed with a little oil
2 tbsp. tomato paste
2 cups chicken stock
1/2 cup black currant or grape jam

Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil. Cut the Miami ribs into pieces, between each bone, and lay them on the pan (they can overlap).

Season on both sides with salt and pepper. Cover the pan completely with foil, and place into a 350-degree oven, on the middle rack. Bake for 1/2 hour, then remove from the oven. Pour off all the excess fat and liquid. Set aside.

In an oven-safe pot or Dutch oven, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until wilted, 4 to 6 minutes. Add the garlic, paprika and tomato paste and cook for another minute, stirring. Add the chicken stock and jam, stir everything together and bring to a simmer.

Add the ribs and return the pan to the 350 oven. Bake, uncovered, for 45 minutes, stirring the pot every 15 minutes. Serve right away or chill and reheat when you're ready to serve them. Yields 4 to 6 servings. Recipe multiplies easily.

Note: Miami ribs are short ribs (flanken) that have been sliced really thin, usually about 1/4-inch thick.

* * *

My friend Gail Gordon Oliver of Toronto is the owner, publisher and editor of an fantastic magazine, Edible Toronto (www.edibletoronto.com). The following recipe for Stewed Cabbage with Meatballs was first published in the Winter 2007 issue of Edible Toronto. This is her take on stuffed cabbage, providing all the flavour without all of the work. The combination of sauerkraut and cranberry sauce creates a delicious sweet-and-sour dimension. This dish can be served as an appetizer or main course.

Continued on page 44

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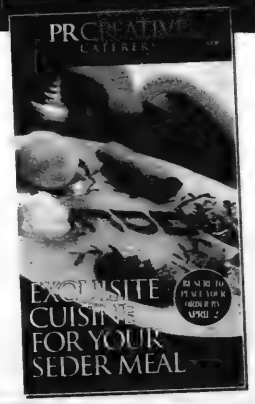

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Pan pals share favourite dishes

Continued from page 42

STEWED CABBAGE WITH MEATBALLS

From Gail Gordon Oliver, Toronto

Meatballs
2 lb. lean ground beef
2 eggs
2 tbsp. ice water
3 tbsp. matzah meal
2 tsp. garlic powder
2 tsp. kosher salt
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Cabbage Stew
3 cups tomato juice
1 cup water
1 small head green cabbage, coarsely chopped
2 medium onions, halved and sliced
1 jar (750 ml or 1 litre) sauerkraut, drained
1 (16-oz.) can jellied cranberry sauce
1/3 cup granulated sugar, plus more if needed
lemon wedges

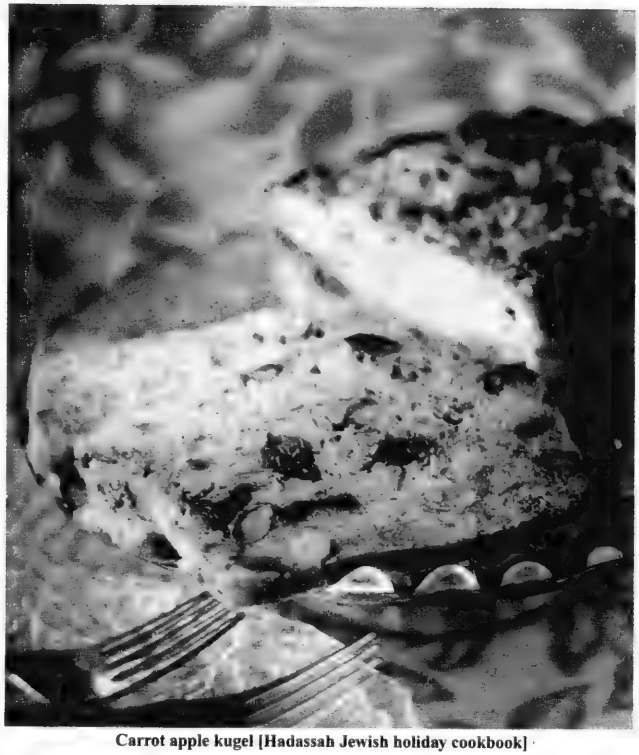
Combine ground beef, eggs, ice water, matzah meal, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Set aside.

In a large Dutch oven or stockpot, put the tomato juice, water, cabbage, onions, sauerkraut, cranberry sauce and sugar; stir well to combine. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Push down on the solids until about an inch of liquid covers the top. Reduce the heat to medium.

Form the meat mixture into 1-in. balls and add them to the pot in a single layer. Cover the pot, reduce the heat, and simmer for 20 minutes. Gently stir the meatballs into the cabbage mixture. Cover the pot and continue to simmer until the meatballs are cooked through and the cabbage is tender, about 40 to 50 minutes. Taste and add sugar, if needed. Serve with lemon wedges. Yield: 6 main-course servings.

* * *

Marc Gordon of Thornhill shared the recipe for this simple and delicious Passover kugel with me – it's one of his favourites. Marc got the recipe from his late mother, Bev Gordon, who loved to cook and bake for her family. My friend Bev often helped me test recipes and would share many favourites with me from her recipe files. I'm so happy that her son Marc has continued his mother's tradition, keeping her memory alive through treasured food memories. When I told him I was including his mother's recipe, he replied: "Thank you – I hope my mom's treasured recipe finds its way onto many tables."



Carrot apple kugel [Hadassah Jewish holiday cookbook]

MUM'S FABULOUS FRUIT KUGEL

From Marc Gordon, son of the late Bev Gordon, Thornhill, Ont.

1 grated apple
1 cup grated carrot
1 cup grated potatoes
1/2 cup chopped pitted prunes
1/2 cup raisins
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup matzah meal
1/2 cup oil
2 tbsp. lemon juice
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350. Lightly grease an 8 x 8-in. sq. glass baking dish. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and mix well. Spread evenly in baking dish.

Bake uncovered in a preheated oven for 45 minutes, until golden. Makes 9 servings. Reheats well.

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Passover, Israeli style

By SUE EPSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Passover is one of the most exciting times of the year. Almost no one works in Israel during chol hamoed, the four intermediate days of Pesach. Most offices are closed for the week and the businesses that are open generally close early.

The weather is beautiful, spring is in the air, the countryside is filled with wildflowers, and it seems like the entire population is outdoors – hiking, camping and picknicking. It's as though everyone was coming out of hibernation.

Picnic grounds are packed with extended families enjoying the holiday. And where else in the world can you see an ice cream truck parked next to the picnic grounds selling matzah along with the ice cream?

Some Israelis picnic by bringing along what seems like their entire kitchen. They bring pots, pans, tables and chairs and cook their meals on site! I prefer my picnics western style, bringing all the food ready-made in a cooler and eating on a blanket on the ground.

Whether you're off on an outing with your family or hanging around the back yard, you'll love these easy dishes that will get you out of the kitchen in a hurry.

MATZAH MEAL PANCAKES

I like to make matzah meal pancakes to use as sandwich bread. They can also be served as a breakfast dish with syrup, cranberry sauce or applesauce. And they can be baked on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet in a 350-degree oven until golden brown.

3 eggs
1/2 cup cold water
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup matzah meal
1 medium onion, grated
melted butter, margarine or oil for frying

Beat eggs and combine with cold water, salt, 2/3 of the grated onion and enough matzah meal to make a stiff batter that will drop from the spoon.

Heat the butter, margarine or vegetable oil in a heavy skillet and add remaining onion for flavour. Drop batter from spoon to form round cakes and fry until brown before turning over to brown on underside. Lift out one at a time and drain thoroughly on paper towel, before serving.

PASSOVER CHICKEN SALAD

This is an excellent way to use up leftover chicken from the chicken soup, and makes delicious picnic fare.

3 to 4 cups shredded cooked chicken
1 1/4 cups finely diced celery (about 4 stalks)
3 carrots, peeled and grated
1 tbsp. grated onion
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
3/4 cup or more mayonnaise

Combine ingredients, transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

TUNA PATTIES

Here's another great picnic food, based on a recipe from Ruth Baks of Jerusalem. You can add chopped bell pepper, parsley, salt and pepper. They're delicious hot or cold. You can also make them ahead and freeze.

4 eggs
3 cans drained tuna
1/2 cup matzah meal
1 small onion, minced
1 stalk celery, minced
3/4 cup additional matzah meal for dredging
oil for frying

Combine ingredients and chill for at least one hour. Scoop out 1/4 cup portions and shape into patties. Gently dredge patties in matzah meal, coating sides evenly. Pat lightly so the crumbs adhere well. Because the mixture is soft, the patty may flatten slightly during breading; use fingertips to gently restore shape and return thickness to about 2 3/4 inch. Set aside breaded patties on tray to rest, then pan fry in hot oil. Makes 12 patties.

PASSOVER APRICOT SQUARES

1/2 lb. butter or margarine
1 cup sugar
1 tbsp. lemon rind
2 egg yolks
2 cups matzah cake meal
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 tsp. vanilla
1 lb. jar apricot preserves
1 cup chopped walnuts or almonds

Preheat oven to 325. Cream butter and sugar together. Add lemon rind and yolks and beat until light in colour. Add the matzah cake meal and mix well.

Press three-quarters of the dough into a greased 9 x 13-in. pan and freeze the remaining dough. Bake crust for 20 minutes. Remove from oven.

Continued on page 47

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Quick take-along suggestions

Continued from page 45

Combine lemon juice, vanilla and preserves and spoon over hot dough. Sprinkle with nuts and grate frozen dough over the top. Bake for an additional 35 minutes. Cool and cut into squares. Makes 24 squares.

CHOCOLATE-COVERED MATZAH

A delicious take-along or for any-time noshing.

6 tbsp. butter or margarine
1/2 cup dark brown sugar
4 sheets regular matzah
8 tbsp. semisweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 400. Line 2 baking sheets with foil.

In a small saucepan, melt the butter or margarine. Add the sugar and stir well.

Place two matzot on each baking sheet. Divide the butter and sugar mixture among the sheets of matzah – about 2 tablespoons for each one. With a rubber spatula, spread the mixture over the entire surface of matzah.

Bake the matzot for 6 to 7 minutes or until the topping is bubbly and brown.

Remove the sheets from the oven and immediately sprinkle each with 2 tbsp. of the chips. Let them sit for 30 seconds, then use a metal palette knife to spread the chocolate evenly.

Transfer the matzah to wire racks. Remove the foil from the baking sheets and set the racks on the sheets. Refrigerate for 30 minutes so the chocolate solidifies. Can be broken into uneven pieces. Makes 24 squares.

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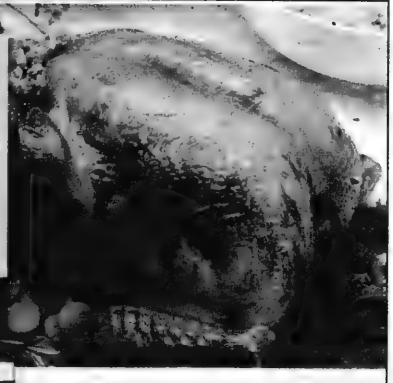

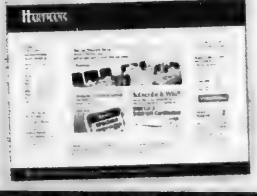

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Russia signs deal to supply Iran with air-defence missiles

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JERUSALEM — Russian news agencies say a top defence official has confirmed that Russia has already signed a contract to sell S-300 air-defence missiles to Iran but that none of the weapons have been delivered.

Russian officials have consistently denied claims that the country has provided some of the powerful missiles to Iran, and they have not clarified whether a contract exists.

The state-run ITAR-Tass and RIA-Novosti news agencies and the independent Interfax quoted an unnamed top official in the Federal Military-Technical Co-operation Service as saying last week that the contract had been signed two years ago.

Service spokesperson Andrei Tarabrin told the Associated Press he could not immediately comment.

Iran's possession of the S-300s would markedly change the military balance in the Middle East.

In related developments last week, American sources told the Saudi newspaper Al-Watan that Israel Defence Forces chief Gabi Ashkenazi provided fresh intelligence to the United States concerning Iran's nuclear facility in Arak during his visit to Washington earlier this week, according to Israel Radio.

Ashkenazi said that while Israel was interested in exhausting diplomatic options against Iran's nuclear program, the army must nevertheless prepare itself for a military attack.

He decided to cut short his trip in order to take part in a special cabinet session on negotiations for a deal to release abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit.

Considered one of Iran's key nuclear sites, Arak is believed to contain a heavy water reactor. A Washington think-tank issued a report on Tuesday saying that ballistic missiles could be Israel's weapon of choice against Iranian nuclear facilities if it decides on a pre-emptive attack and deems air strikes too risky.

Israel is widely assumed to have Jericho missiles capable of hitting Iran with an accuracy of a few dozen metres from the target. Such a capability would eliminate the main drawbacks of warplanes – limits on fuel and ordnance, and danger to pilots.

During a visit to Washington, D.C., Ashkenazi met with Dennis Ross, the designated U.S. envoy to the Persian Gulf, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, to discuss the Iranian issue.

The IDF chief told Ross that Israel would not tolerate a nuclear Iran. He said a diplomatic approach to Iran's contentious nuclear program must be taken first, but added that Israel must also prepare for other possibilities.

Durban II draft resolution amended, still displeases critics

JTA

JERUSALEM — Specific criticism of Israel has been dropped from a draft resolution prepared for a United Nations-sponsored anti-racism conference.

The new draft resolution for the Durban II conference, the followup to the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban, South Africa, is to be distributed to government ministers this week. It does not single out Israel for criticism but still speaks of concern about negative stereotyping of religions. It also does not include a provision backed by Muslim countries that criticizes "defamation of religion."

The new draft, obtained by JTA, comes amid recent threats from the European Union, Germany and Australia to boycott the Durban Review Conference to be held April 20 to 24, unless the resolution is more balanced and avoids the high level of anti-Israel sentiment associated with the first Durban anti-racism conference.

Israel and Canada already have said they will not attend the conference. The United States and Italy also have said they will not attend unless the resolution is more balanced.

The original resolution singled out Israel as having racist policies and called it an occupying power. The draft also included five paragraphs devoted to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The elimination of references to Israel and other specific countries, and the striking of the "defamation of religion" passage do meet some of the Barack Obama administration's conditions for participation in the conference laid out in late February. But the new text reaffirms the concluding document of the first Durban conference, which singled out the "plight of the Palestinian people under foreign occupation."

"A significant effort has been made to clean up the text, but problems remain," Hillel Neuer, executive director of UN Watch, said on a Jewish Community Relations Council of New York conference call Tuesday afternoon.

Neuer said, however, that the changes would likely make it easier for some countries that had been considering boycotting to make the decision to participate.

CHW

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO deeply mourns the untimely passing of its recently elected National President

Terry Schwarzfeld z"l

Terry was a true Woman of Valour, a devoted wife, mother and a proud grandmother. We will all miss her spirit and zest for life.

A fund for Terry has been established, with proceeds going to the Terry Schwarzfeld Ottawa Daycare Centre, Israel.

May her memory be for a blessing.

Marla Dan, CHW National President — CHW National Officers — Alina Ianson, Executive Director

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Hadassah Around the World
Mourns the Tragic Loss of

Terry Schwarzfeld

A Passionate and Visionary Leader
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of Children and Women
in Canada and Israel

HADASSAH

World WIZO
mourns the untimely passing of

Terry Schwarzfeld z"l

20th National President of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO
A passionate believer in Israel and the Jewish People

May her memory be a constant source of inspiration and comfort.
We extend our deepest condolences to her family.

Mrs. Helena Glaser, President — Mrs. Tova Ben-Dov, Chairperson

Hezbollah may be behind Haifa bomb attempt

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JERUSALEM — A senior source in the Palestinian Authority told Ha'aretz last Sunday that he suspects Hezbollah or another organization with links to Iran was behind the attempted bombing of the Lev Hamifratz shopping mall in Haifa on Saturday night.

According to the source, the PA holds definitive intelligence that Hezbollah has been trying for some time to recruit members of Fatah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad in an attempt to get operatives of those terror groups to carry out an attack in Israel.

The aim of the Lebanese Shiite group is to carry out a massive terrorist attack that would avenge the assassination of its mastermind terrorist, Imad Mughniyeh, in Damascus in February 2008, the Palestinian source said. Hezbollah blames Israel for Mughniyeh's death.

Last week, two police officers were killed in the Jordan Valley, and an anonymous caller claimed responsibility in the name of the Mughniyeh Units.

In recent weeks, there has been a slight increase in the number of attempted attacks on both sides of the Green Line (the pre-1967 border), leading security forces to examine the possibility that some of the events may be linked. All the same, a Shin Bet security service official said there was nothing to suggest an overall upsurge of terror.

"During the past months there have been warnings for pending attacks," the source said yesterday. "But we do not identify an unusual trend suggesting a renewed wave of terrorism."

The investigation of the attempted bombing, some details of which are still under a gag order, suggests that it was an unusually sophisticated plan, and officials suspect the know-how came from abroad.

The terror attack was thwarted when police sappers disarmed a bomb weighing dozens of kilograms in a car outside the mall Saturday night. An organization calling itself the Galilee Freedom Fighters claimed responsibility Saturday, but security officials said they doubted the veracity of the claim.

The bomb had the potential to cause enormous destruction, said Yossi Malka, a police sapper involved in defusing the bomb.

"We can compare the potential blast to 15 suicide bombers exploding at once," he said.

As a result of the bombing attempt, security at malls and public institutions throughout the city was stepped up Sunday.

Sappers said one part of the device had gone off prematurely and another had failed to detonate.

The first sapper to reach the car bomb said there were dozens of kilograms of explosives and metal balls in a bag, which "were packed into various packages that included all the components of a bomb." He identified the car as containing a "live bomb," rather than merely a vehicle that aroused suspicion, and got into the car to disable the explosive immediately. He was joined by three other sappers several minutes later.

"The immediate urgency of dismantling the bomb and the presence of so many people in the area meant that we had to feel and smell the explosive, physically deal with the components rather than doing it from a distance with a robot," said the sapper. "Most of the bomb was dismantled by hand."

The entire operation lasted about half an hour, though the lab analysis of the evidence and the search for suspects in the area took longer.

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His years of leadership and devotion to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem will always be remembered.

May the Almighty console you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem

Ronald Appleby, Q.C.
National President

Rami Kleinmann
National Director

Monette Malewski
President Montreal Chapter

Carolyn Steinman
Montreal Director

Arab League rejects ICC warrant

By ERIC FINGERHUT
JTA

WASHINGTON — The Arab League rejected an international arrest warrant for the president of Sudan.

Omar al-Bashir will be able to attend an Arab League summit in Qatar this month after both the Arab League and Qatar rebuffed a request by the International Criminal Court to adhere to the warrant, Associated Press reported.

Omar al-Bashir

Member states must arrest individuals indicted by the court once the person enters the country, but only three members of the Arab League are court members – Jordan, Djibouti and Comoros.

"The court asked Qatar and the Arab League at the same time, but our legal position on the matter does not allow what the International Criminal Court is requesting," said Arab League head Amr Moussa during a visit last week to Syria.

Moussa said arresting Bashir might negatively affect stability and security in Sudan, and that the Arab League is co-operating with the African Union in a bid to delay prosecution of the Sudanese president for at least a year. The United States opposes the move.

The court issued an arrest warrant for Bashir on March 4 for war crimes and crimes against humanity based on the government-backed genocide in the Darfur region. Bashir responded by ejecting 13 international humanitarian aid groups from Sudan.

On March 17, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said Bashir would be "responsible for every single death" that occurs due to his expulsion of aid groups. U.S. President Barack Obama last week named retired Air Force officer Scott Gration as his special envoy to Sudan.

Israeli commandos operated at Syrian reactor: Swiss paper

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JERUSALEM — An Israeli commando unit carried out a reconnaissance mission at an alleged Syrian nuclear reactor that was later destroyed by the Israel Air Force.

The August 2007 reconnaissance mission was reported by the Swiss daily Neue Zuercher Zeitung last Thursday.

The 12-man unit was dropped by two helicopters onto the site, according to the report, where they proceeded to take soil samples and photographs. The clandestine operation reportedly took place, about a month before the IAF strike on the al-Kabir reactor in the country's eastern desert, said the article.

The piece was written by Hans Ruehle, former chief of the planning staff of the German Defence Ministry.

Ruehle also reported that a top-ranked Iranian defector told the United States that Iran was financing North Korean moves to make Syria into a nuclear weapons power, leading to the Israeli air strike.

The article goes into detail about an Iranian connection and fills in gaps about Israel's Sept. 6, 2007, raid that is said to have knocked out Syria's reportedly nearly-completed reactor.

Ali Reza Asghari, a retired general in Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards and a former deputy defence minister, changed sides in February 2007 and provided considerable information to the West on Iran's own nuclear program, the paper reported.

The biggest surprise, however, was his assertion that Iran was financing a secret nuclear project of Syria and North Korea, he said. No one in the American intelligence scene had heard anything of it. And the Israelis who were immediately informed also were completely unaware.

Ruehle, who did not identify the sources of his information, publishes and comments on security and nuclear proliferation in different European newspapers and broadcasts and has held prominent roles in German and NATO institutions.

U.S. intelligence had detected North Korean ship deliveries of construction supplies to Syria that started in 2002, and American satellites spotted the construction as early as 2003, but regarded the work as nothing unusual, in part because the Syrians had banned radio and telephones from the site and handled communications solely by messengers – medieval but effective, Ruehle said.

"The analysis was conclusive that it was a North Korean-type reactor, a gas graphite model," Ruehle said.

Other sources have suggested that the reactor might have been large enough to make about one nuclear weapon's worth of plutonium a year.

Just before the Israeli commando raid, a North Korean ship was intercepted en route to Syria with nuclear fuel rods, underscoring the need for fast action, he said.

On the morning of Sept. 6, 2007, seven Israeli F-15 fighter bombers reportedly took off to the north. They flew along the Mediterranean coast, brushed past Turkey and pressed on into Syria. Fifty kilometres from their target, they fired 22 rockets at the three identified objects inside the Kibar complex, according to Ruehle.

"The Syrians were completely surprised. By the time their air defence systems were ready, the Israeli planes were well out of range. The mission was successful, the reactor destroyed," Ruehle said.

"Israel estimates that Iran had paid North Korea between $1 billion and $2 billion for the project."

Israel has refused from the beginning to comment on, confirm or deny the strike, but after a delay of several months Washington presented intelligence purporting to show the target was a reactor being built with North Korean help.

Iranian officials were not available for comment because of a national holiday. In general, Iran has been silent about the Syrian facility bombed by Israel. Syrian officials could not be reached for comment. But Syria has denied the facility was a nuclear plant, saying it was an unused military building. It has also denied any nuclear cooperation with North Korea or Iran.

The International Atomic Energy Agency earlier this year said United Nations inspectors had found processed uranium traces in samples taken from the site.

Syria has suggested the traces came from Israeli ordnance used to hit the site, but the IAEA said the composition of the uranium made that unlikely. Israel has denied that it was the source of the uranium.

Venezuela Jews rebuild after synagogue attack

By JASMINA KELEMEN
JTA

CARACAS — The quiet on a residential street in this eastern Venezuelan city is shattered by construction crews as workers perched on a scaffolding place panels of marble on the external wall of a two-storey synagogue.

The construction occurs under the watchful eye of local police, who monitor the street around the clock. From its post on the corner, the police van has kept surveillance over the site since late January, when an older synagogue in the rundown Mariperez district of Caracas was attacked and desecrated.

Committed to their future here, the city's Jews are building a new synagogue to replace the 50-year-old Sephardi synagogue that was attacked.

Hugo Chavez

They must do so under police protection.

On Jan. 30, more than a dozen assailants invaded Tiferet Israel, overpowering two security guards and disabling the surveillance system. They desecrated holy objects, stole a computer database with the congregation's personal information and put this city's Jews on edge.

"It's something that is really shocking and that has never been seen before in Venezuela. Never ever," said Federica Palomero, who curates a small museum at Tiferet Israel. "In Venezuela, there's a tradition of coexistence, tolerance, respect and mutual admiration."

Synagogue members say that anti-Semitic graffiti began to appear on the temple's exterior walls in January, after President Hugo Chavez expelled the Israeli ambassador from the country to protest the Israeli military operation in the Gaza Strip.

As Chavez ratcheted up his rhetoric against Israel, calling it a genocidal state, the official media followed suit, calling for a boycott on local Jewish businesses unless they publicly denounced Israel.

Venezuelan Jews, who first arrived here in the 1700s, say an unprecedented wave of anti-Semitism has followed.

"People are being taught to hate," said Venezuelan Chief Rabbi Pynchas Brener. "Venezuela has never seen anything like this before."

"We've never had any kind of political or social problems in Venezuela," he went on. "Venezuelans are extremely tolerant – they accept differences."

Other attacks and outbursts of hostility followed the Tiferet Israel attack. In February, unknown assailants lobbed a small explosive into a Caracas Jewish community centre.

A local production of Fiddler on the Roof was even caught in the maelstrom, after the orchestra chairman pulled out of the musical, possibly because of the play's Jewish content.

The play's producer, Michel Hausmann, said Manuel Torres, who had performed in Fiddler in the past, felt that to do so this year would be politically offensive and threaten his financial support from the state.

Torres refused to comment about the case when reached by JTA via telephone. But in an interview several days earlier with a local daily, the chairman denied being pressured and said the orchestra was concentrating on other events.

For its part, the government has been erratic in its response to the attacks on the Jewish community.

At first, Chavez and other members of his government denounced the attack on Tiferet, promising the assailants would be quickly apprehended. But Chavez also blamed government opponents for the raid and told the Jewish community not "to allow themselves to be manipulated."

Then the Interior Ministry arrested 11 people, saying robbery was their real motive and that it simply was disguised as a "bias" crime.

While local Jewish leaders have publicly expressed their gratitude toward the government for prioritizing the investigation, many in the community quietly express doubt that the real perpetrators of the attack will be brought to light.

As Tiferet's Palomero guides a visitor through a small exhibit of pictures showing the destruction caused by the attack she says the attack does not reflect the attitudes of Venezuelans toward Jews "but rather those of a small group" that is "small, but active, dangerous and supported."

Like many Jews here, Palomero declined to say who she believes is behind the attacks. But Jewish leaders from overseas have made clear who they believe is to blame.

"Now that I've been here and seen this with my own eyes, I have no doubt that direct responsibility for the attack on the Tiferet Israel synagogue goes directly to the door of Hugo Chavez," said Rabbi Shmuel Herzfeld of Congregation Ohev Sholom in Washington after a recent visit to Caracas.

"The attack couldn't have happened without the permission of Chavez," he said, noting the technical sophistication used to break into the synagogue and crack safes inside.

Herzfeld, who was part of a four-person delegation from North America, said he is pressing U.S. Democratic congressman, Eliot Engel, chairman of the House foreign affairs subcommittee on the western hemisphere, to assemble a congressional commission on religious freedoms in Venezuela.

Israel also is using its diplomatic muscle to keep the spotlight on Venezuela's treatment of the Jewish community. Its Foreign Ministry has asked 15 countries with ties to Venezuela to bring up the issue with Chavez, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

"There has been a significant outbreak of anti-Semitism there, and we wanted to send messages to Venezuela's president through several different channels in order to clarify the gravity with which we view the situation," a senior government source told the paper.

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Israel Briefs

IDF investigates allegations

Israel's military will investigate claims that some soldiers didn't behave appropriately during the recent military operation in Gaza. The Israel Defence Forces' Military Advocate General, Brig.-Gen. Avichai Mendelblit, instructed the Criminal Investigation Division of the IDF Military Police to investigate the claims made regarding alleged actions of soldiers during the war. The announcement came after soldiers at a military academy, the "Rabin" Preparation Program in Oranim, claimed during a post-operation conference that some Israeli soldiers violated rules of engagement. The content of the conference discussions was released, prompting the announcement of the investigation. Two major Israeli newspapers, Ha'aretz and Ma'ariv, began reporting soldiers' stories last week and said they would publish more. The soldiers described instances in which soldiers opened fire too hastily on civilians and destroyed Palestinian property indiscriminately.

Coalition effort extension

President Shimon Peres last Friday gave prime minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu a 14-day extension to form a government. Netanyahu said he needed more time in light of the headway his Likud party made in talks with Labor leader Ehud Barak. Netanyahu will meet with Barak despite Netanyahu's original hope to have formed a right-wing cabinet by this past Monday. Seven of Labor's 13 MKs object to Barak's proposal to join Netanyahu's government. At least five say they intend to vote against a unity government, even if the party membership approves it.

No Schalit talks

Hamas said it has suspended talks to free Gilad Schalit and would increase its demands when they resume. The kidnapped soldier's parents said they would end their "Save Me" campaign. The campaign ended last Saturday, Schalit's 1,000th day in captivity. Noam and Aviva Schalit conducted an 11-day protest living in a tent outside the prime minister's office in Jerusalem. "All we can do now is wait for a miracle," Noam Schalit told reporters. A senior Hamas source said Hamas is willing to turn Schalit into a new Ron Arad, an Israeli airman who has been missing since 1986. "We can demand much greater numbers than the 450 prisoners," the source told Ynet. "If they want the soldier, they need to pay. If they don't want to pay, their soldier will remain imprisoned by us for eternity."

Hamas arrests in West Bank

Israel arrested 10 Hamas leaders in the West Bank last week. The Israel Defense Forces said the arrested men were "terror operatives" who have been "the leaders of the ongoing effort to restore the administrative branch of the Hamas terror organization in the region while attempting to strengthen the power and influence of Hamas." The arrests came two days after Egyptian-mediated talks stalled then halted between Israel and Hamas on a prisoner swap to free kidnapped soldier Gilad Schalit.

Dahlan: Fatah never recognized Israel

A longtime Fatah leader says the group has never recognized Israel's right to exist. Mohammed Dahlan, former Fatah security commander, made the remarks during an interview with a Palestinian Authority-controlled television station. He was responding to a question about Fatah's reported insistence that Hamas recognize Israel's right to exist as a precondition for the establishment of a Palestinian "unity government," the Jerusalem Post reported. Dahlan, who was recently tapped to serve as an adviser to Fatah's leader, PA President Mahmoud Abbas, said the PLO, an umbrella organization of Palestinian groups that has been headed by Fatah's leader, did recognize Israel. "We acknowledge that the PLO did recognize Israel's right to exist, but we are not bound by it as a resistance faction," he said.

–files from JTA and Ha'aretz

New mayor looks to Diaspora to revitalize Jerusalem

By DINA KRAFT
JTA

JERUSALEM — Hanging over his desk, Nir Barkat keeps a large framed photograph of himself running the Jerusalem half-marathon. The city's new mayor is quick to remind a visitor he also runs full marathons.

That's good: He's going to need the perseverance of a long-distance runner to pull off his ambitious plan to save Jerusalem.

Though Israel's capital and one of the world's oldest and most revered cities, Jerusalem is also the poorest city in Israel, with high housing prices, a shrinking non-Orthodox population and a dwindling middle class.

In an interview with JTA at his office atop the municipal building, Barkat expounded on his plans to revitalize Jerusalem.

Boyish looking at 49, Barkat cuts an earnest figure in a charcoal gray suit, sky blue Oxford shirt and no tie. The former paratrooper, who made millions in high-tech, has been in office for three months after defeating veteran haredi politician Meir Porush and others.

Secular and modern Orthodox Jerusalemites greeted his election with great hope, thinking Barkat might be able to lift the city from its current rut. (Most Arab residents boycotted the election, as they do most years, in protest against Israeli sovereignty over the city.)

Barkat will be travelling to the United States, where he hopes to reach out to American Jews and make them partners in revitalizing Jerusalem. To use his language, he sees them as "shareholders" in the city.

"I know there is not one Jew who does not care about the future of Jerusalem, and what I propose is a partnership," he said.

Barkat's plan is to create special economic zones in Jerusalem that are focused on culture, life sciences and tourism. He will make his pitch in visits to New York, Boston, Los Angeles, Washington, San Francisco and Florida.

Barkat is hoping Diaspora Jews will be investment partners in joint business ventures. For example, he says, Jews in Los Angeles might invest in Jerusalem's fledgling film industry, and biotech engineers in Boston might invest in biotech in a city that hosts Hadassah Hospital and the prestigious Hebrew University.

The global financial crisis is no deterrent, he says.

"I believe in the short term, it will be more of a challenge because people have less than they had in the past or less than they want, but I'm not talking about short term," Barkat told JTA. "I want to build relationships. It's the way we do business together."

As part of the mayor's campaign to develop the city, Barkat was recently named honorary chair of the Jerusalem Foundation, the non-profit organization founded by former mayor Teddy Kollek in 1967 dedicated to the physical enhancement of the city and to social and educational enhancement of its people.

Barkat and the foundation have committed themselves to working together in co-operation to further strengthen the capital of Israel. He closed down the New Jerusalem Foundation, an initiative of Ehud Olmert when Olmert was mayor of the city, whose mission overlapped with the older, more recognized foundation established by Kollek. In doing so Barkat sent a clear message to philanthropists around the world in support of the Jerusalem Foundation and its central role in the city's rejuvenation and development.

Canadian national president of The Jerusalem Foundation, Julia Koschitzky, recently met with the new mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, when he addressed the Keren Hayesod-UIA leadership last month in Jerusalem.

[Photo courtesy of Keren Hayesod-UIA.]

But Barkat's direct, unabashed approach towards his work has raised the ire of some observers. He tussled verbally with visiting U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton earlier this month over his plan to demolish some 80 Arab houses in the neighbourhood of Silwan, just outside the walls of the Old City, to make way for an archeological park. Clinton called his plan "unhelpful" and a violation of peace efforts, while Barkat dismissed the criticism as based on "disinformation."

The dispute is one of Barkat's first tests as mayor.

The neighbourhood slated for demolition is comprised of houses built illegally by Palestinian residents of Jerusalem on land that had been set aside 20 years ago as open green space for an archeological garden.

Under three previous city administrations the houses were never removed, but recently the development plans for a park were revived.

Critics of the plan claim the issue is about politics. Not only will it displace some 1,000 Arab residents, they say, but it's part of a wider, ideologically motivated plan to secure the future of a united, Jewish Jerusalem in negotiations with the Palestinians.

Barkat, who favours settling Jews in Silwan – several dozen families have moved into the largely Arab area in recent years – rejects such criticism and says the people who live there will be relocated.

"If you have a group of people trying to plan housing in Central Park, what do you think Mayor [Michael] Bloomberg would do?" Barkat asked rhetorically. "And this park has more importance than Central Park because of its historical significance."

As for the relationship between the municipal and national governments, Barkat said he foresees a good working relationship with Benjamin Netanyahu and his staff when Netanyahu becomes prime minister.

"I know the people, and I believe they want to develop and improve Jerusalem," the mayor said. "There is good chemistry."

Barkat hopes the new government will provide a stimulus package for the city, which previous governments have promised but never delivered.

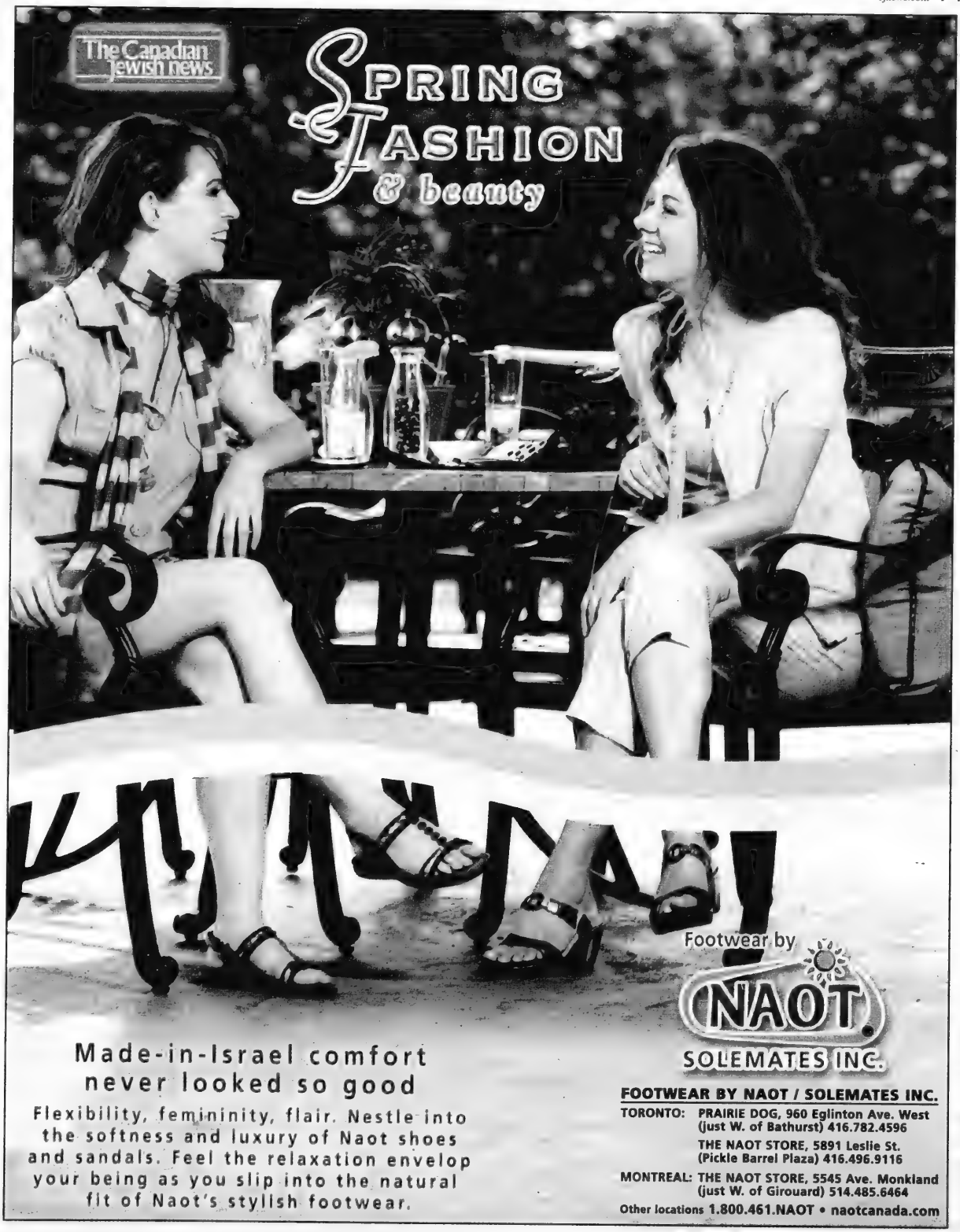
To keep the young and middle class in Jerusalem, Barkat is hoping his economic cluster zones will bear fruit and that more jobs in high-tech, life sciences, tourism and culture will keep people in Jerusalem.

"When you make Jerusalem a special economic zone, it will start raining on everyone, and with more jobs, the city comes out of its poverty," Barkat said.

He has also called for construction of more affordable housing, not just the luxury projects aimed at Diaspora Jewish buyers with money who have been predominant in recent years. Barkat wants the absentee Diaspora homeowners to rent their apartments inexpensively to local university students.

"You own an apartment, you subsidize students, help the economy and decrease the price of other apartments," he said with his trademark smile. "It's a classic win-win."

–With files from The CJN



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See real 'stars' at Grandview Delta Resort

Spa Life
By Kathryn Kates

Beautifying wishes do come true on the shores of Fairy Lake at Amba Health & Beauty Spa at the Delta Grandview Resort in Muskoka, Ont., minutes away from downtown Huntsville.

"People come to Muskoka for relaxation, so I try to keep the spa intimate with top-quality services and products," says spa owner/operator Corrinna MacConnell, a British-trained beauty therapist and esthetician.

The spa décor has modern elements with warm earthy tones enhanced with glowing candles.

The Amba Spa offers three treatment rooms, including a double massage room suited to couples and girlfriend getaways, and a separate area with two manicure and pedicure stations. The oversized comfy pedicure chairs are state of the art, with a massaging mechanism to die for.

In addition, there is a retail/reception area and a new guest lounge suite facing the lake – well suited to wedding parties and special groups – equipped with a kitchenette to serve buffet lunches to hungry spa-going groups preparing for a big event.

The staff at the spa numbers six, including one full- and one part-time registered massage therapist, two estheticians, a nail technician and a reflexologist.

The Amba Spa offers a number of services. Facials offered are an Aromatic Facial; Liftosome for lifting and anti-fatigue; Beaute Neuve – an exfoliating facial; the deep-cleansing Hydradermie Facial that purifies, moisturizes and oxygenates the skin with a galvanic current; the Men Spa Facial designed just for him; and the Express Facial. Facial add-ons include paraffin-wax treatment for the hands and feet, and scalp, eye or neck treatments.

Also offered is an array of massages, including hot stone and aromatherapy; reflexology; back treatments; manicures and pedicures; body wraps, including the European-Rose Body Mud and the Black Baltic Body Mud. For special occasions, including weddings, top-notch hairstylists are brought in and make-up artistry is available.

The spa offers three packages, including the two-hour Pure Balance, the five-hour Ultimate Spa Sensation and the most popular package according to MacConnell, the three-hour Retreat to Nature, which includes the Hot Rocks Foot Treatment, Deluxe Pedicure, Express Facial, Aromatherapy Hot Towels with Body Polish and European-Rose Body Mud Wrap, as well as a massage incorporating Swedish massage and the hot-rocks treatment.

"We have packages with the resort that offer guests accommodations, some meals and a $50 spa credit, including the romance package with champagne and chocolate truffles in the room," MacConnell says.

The resort's couples business is growing, but the clientele now is about 70 per cent women – 80 per cent are hotel guests and the rest locals. This year, MacConnell plans to offer women's wellness retreat packages. She will be putting this relaxation package together with the help of a psychotherapist.

Since 1911, the Delta Grandview Resort has been welcoming guests who are seeking the quiet serenity of the countryside. The all-year-round resort offers an array of accommodations consisting of 125 cosy signature rooms and one-, two- and three-bedroom spacious luxury suites, all uniquely decorated. A number of the suites feature a whirlpool bath, fireplace and full kitchen with picturesque views of Fairy Lake.

There is plenty to do when not rejuvenating at the Amba Spa, including staying fit at the recreation centre, where you will find an exercise facility, a hot tub, a sauna, an indoor pool and even an indoor tennis court with racquets and balls provided. In warmer months, Delta Grandview's heated outdoor pool overlooking the lake attracts guests.

During the winter, guests can do some cross-country skiing on well-groomed trails, tobogganand snowshoe, and they don't have to worry about equipment – it's provided by the resort. There is also an outdoor man-made ice rink for those who bring their skates from home.

In the summer, the Delta Grandview's many activities include tennis, mountain biking, basketball, frolicking along the sandy beach, boat cruises, sailing, windsurfing, kayaking, canoeing, pedal boats, nightly bonfires and KidZone – a supervised, structured program for youngsters – perfect for kids while Mom and Dad partake in services at the spa. Guests have exclusive access to ClubLink's on-site Mark O'Meara Golf Course and, for aspiring golfers, there's a nine-hole Academy Golf Course.

[Kathryn Kates photo]

At many luxury resorts, you can often spot a celebrity, but at the Delta Grandview you can see real "stars" close up, when you book an evening at Ecco Valley Observatory – Canada's first astronomical resort-based observatory. Resident astronomer Thomas Kovacs takes guests on a journey through the solar system from one of the highest points in Muskoka.

For more spa information, contact Amba Health & Beauty Spa at www.ambaspa.com or call 705-789-1374. To book at the Delta Grandview Resort, call 1-888-244-8666 or online at www.deltahotels.com.

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The cold, dark days of winter are almost behind us and the warm, light days of spring are about to arrive. It is time to change your wardrobe and makeup and prepare yourself for the most beautiful months that lie ahead. The bright red lips and heavy eyebrows are gone, and the hottest makeup look involves larger false eyelashes, soft smoky eyes with hues of violet, green, yellow, blue and gold and flawless complexions. Eyebrows are softer and more natural. For spring 2009, blushes are in shades of soft peaches, roses and pastel plums. Lipstick is back in a large way. Nude and pale lip colour is in, as well as pinks, salmons and rich berry hues. Lip gloss is still hot but only to add shine.

FIORIO – "Spring is here!" Maurice Fiorio says. Toss off your toques and let your hair flow free. Sexy movable hair is a must this season, from bouncy layers to tousled waves. This look is easy to wear and makes every woman feel fresh and gorgeous. Spring 2009 will bring back long and medium-length hairstyles that soften the face and appear more feminine. Expect to see tone on tone and bright, clean hair colours, keeping things very monochromatic. Improving the texture and enriching the colour will help the hair appear beautiful, healthy and natural. After a long winter of constricted hair, reinvent yourself with this refreshing trend.

Every woman wants to enjoy a salon experience that leaves her hair feeling healthy, nourished and deeply pampered. New **SEAH HAIRSPA** Ocean Mineral from **Schwarzkopf Professional** empowers women to revel in deep, indulgent care and get long-lasting voluminous results. Now taking care of fine hair becomes a daily luxury!

MOROCCANOIL is a revolutionary line of lightweight hair-care products specially formulated with argan oil. By hydrating and protecting, it effectively revives weakened hair without weighing down strands.

Do your friends say you look angry or tired all the time, when really you're not? You may not know it, but your eyebrows could be the culprit. Badly defined brows can put a permanent expression on your face – without you batting an eye. Define your brows before they define you with **Tweezerman Professional**'s acclaimed eyebrow products.

Long considered windows to the soul, eyes can reveal a lot about you; they are powerful and natural indicators of your personality and style. For those looking to amplify their eyes, look no further than legendary and trusted personal grooming brand **Tweezerman Professional**. Offering a specialized selection of tools that beautifully groom eyebrows and lashes, the trusted line will bestow gorgeous results to your face and prompt others to wonder how you got those pretty peepers. Be sure to try the Folding ilash Comb, Classic Lash Curler, Super Curl Eyelash Curler and a Brow Shaping Brush.

STACEY'S TIPS

SPA AND SKIN CARE: Reveal your best you: uncover smoother, younger skin with **Dermaglow**'s Glycolic Smoothing Moisturizer – skin appears revitalized and hydrated even after the first treatment.

Lancôme launches a triple-action anti-wrinkle cream: High Résolution Refill-3-XTM, a major anti-wrinkle breakthrough. The exclusive technology of **Lancôme**'s Refill-3XTM complex helps boost the synthesis of the three key natural skin fillers – collagen, hyaluronic acid and elastin – in order to fight wrinkles.

In 2008, **Clarins** launched the HydraQuench skin-care line. In 2009, two new amazing products are being added to this successful range. HydraQuench Cream Mask is especially designed for dry and dehydrated skin. It provides moisture and hydration to the skin within five minutes of application. Lips need special attention of their own. They need hydration, protection and softness. Moisture Replenishing Lip Balm is designed to provide all this.

Lancôme's research and innovations laboratories are once again pushing back the frontiers of anti-age care for men's skin with Age Force, Global Anti-Age Treatment. Effectively fighting the signs of aging in men over 50, the active substances in Age Force have been selected for their ability to work on two levels, giving men's skin a global, all-round solution to their skin's problems.

Skin is precious. Reward it with **Estée Lauder**'s Re-Nutriv Intensive Lifting Collection, which is introducing the new Re-Nutriv Intensive Lifting Lotion, a luxe, lightweight version of the crème with exceptional lifting benefits, to create luminous, visibly younger-looking skin.

Estée Lauder takes skin resurfacing to a totally new dimension of ideal! Idealist Dual-Action Refinishing Treatment, a refined all-in-one skin-renewing treatment, offers a gentle alternative to microdermabrasion and a 30 per cent glycolic acid peel, providing instant skin-renewing benefits.

Finally, protection without irritation! **Cliniderm** introduces new Gentle Protective Lotion SPF 45 daily protection for even the most sensitive and reactive skin. Ideal for sensitive, zero-tolerance skin of all ages and offers year-round sunscreen protection for the entire family.

NeoStrata meets consumers' needs once again, launching a daytime version of its top-selling Wrinkle Repair: new Daytime Wrinkle Repair with SPF 15. Wrinkle Repair is clinically proven to repair even deep wrinkles, yielding a reduction of up to 66 per cent in the number of wrinkles and 78 per cent in the total length of wrinkles.

Pamper yourself from head to toe with **Yves Rocher**. Be sure to try Inositol Végétal Skin Optimizer, Lavande Essentielle Restorative Mask – Damaged Feet, and Lavande Essentielle 12H Foot Deodorant Cream.

Continued on page 56

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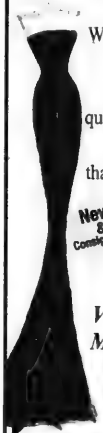

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Continued from page 55

This breakthrough botanical collection proves that not all visible skin damage is forever. The **Make A Difference** Collection relies on a team of highly effective natural skin redeemers to enable skin to declare a "do-over" and to resume a youthful look and feel. New to the collection are **Make A Difference** Ultra-rich rejuvenating cream and **Make A Difference** Skin rejuvenating treatment lotion.

Look no further for the fountain of youth! The **Youthtopia** Collection contains the powerful ingredient rhodiola, a phenomenal plant that works to provide a rich reserve of energy to the skin and improve its appearance. Don't miss **Youthtopia** Age-Correcting Serum, Firming Eye Cream, Skin Firming Cream and Skin Firming Lotion.

Enjoy what nature has to offer with **Secret**'s line of eco-friendly socks! **Secret** has launched an innovative line of socks that isn't just good for you; it's good for the environment, too.

The snow has melted, the skies are blue, and body-hugging spring fashions are finally coming out of hibernation. This season, make the most of curve-conscious clothes with the help of a few key pieces from **Secret Fusion**. Try the **Secret Fusion** Brief, the **Secret Fusion** Mid Thigh and High Waist Mid Thigh and the **Secret Fusion** Capri!

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FRANCINE'S TIPS

CONCEALER & FOUNDATION: Are you tired of those dark circles and the look of fatigue? Well, don't look any further. **Yves Rocher Couleurs Nature** introduces Complexion Concealer Palette and Radiance Corrector Pen, two amazing products that can help erase these problems.

The time has come to reverse all the damaging effects of the winter. **Clarins** decided to launch a supplement product that is specifically designed for mature skin. Super Restorative Foundation is the foundation for those who want to have the look of a luminous and colourful makeup in natural or artificial lights. The skin is protected, younger looking, firmer and smoother.

Estée Lauder is proud to present the Nutritious Vita-Mineral Makeup Collection. Nutritious Vita-Mineral Liquid Makeup is the newest way to get your mineral makeup every day and provides additional moisture.

Yves Rocher creates the first makeup line inspired by nature. Each product contains a natural active botanical ingredient that marks its originality and guarantees its effectiveness. As of April 2009, **Yves Rocher** will introduce Comfort Cream Foundation, Flawless Finish Fluid Foundation, Matte Fluid Foundation and Second Skin Effect Foundation.

Nutritious Vita-Mineral Loose Power SPF15 Makeup is a non-drying powder that comes with its own exclusive deluxe loose powder foundation brush that makes creating a natural, flawless look a breeze.

EYE MAKEUP: After getting through these long, tough months, nothing can perk up your spirits more than a new spring look for eye makeup. Shades of pink, purple, blue and green are hot, as well as dark blue eyeliner. For daytime, apply the colour lightly, and then enhance with a soft smoky look for evening. Complement the intense shades of spring with **Estée Lauder**'s Signature Eyeshadow Duo in new, limited-edition shades of dark, inky indigo and rich, earthen aubergine.

Estee Lauder Re-Nutriv, Intensive Lifting Lotion

Clarins offers a limited-edition eye make-up palette that combines six pure subtle shades packaged in a silver compact with a floral design. You can become very creative with all these wonderful colours. Also, try the ultramarine eye pencil.

In order to prevent eye infections, you should replace mascara every three months, so what better time than with the change of seasons? Curvés are back and big is beautiful! Now's the time to live life to the fullest. Introducing Sexy Curves Mascara from **Rimmel London**. The flexible purple applicator has shorter bristles to build volume and longer ones to curl and separate, for a sultry look.

Yves Rocher Couleurs Nature is proud to present Extra-Volume Mascara, the mascara that makes the lashes thick, and separates with its amazing fibre coating brush, as well as Curl Extender Mascara which stretches, lengthens and curls each lash by lash.

BLUSH: If you are looking for blushes, try **Yves Rocher Couleurs Nature** complexion. Brush-on Illuminator is in a tube, Natural Blush has a sheer, powdery texture, Highlighter and Shimmer Powder Duo create a healthy glow and brightening effect and Bronzer and Shimmer Powder Duo gives a sun-kissed and brightening effect.

LIPS: Brighten your smile with **Elizabeth Arden**'s Color Intrigue Effects Lipstick (limited edition), sensational shades, moisturizing colour, and lasting effects.

If you are looking for that take-anywhere lip balm, **Clarins** has introduced Instant Sun Light Lip Balm SPF6, a protective, melt-in-the-mouth texture that tastes as good as it looks.

OPI Envy Express Kit

FRAGRANCES: The right makeup makes you look pretty, but fragrances are really the finishing touch. **Elizabeth Arden** presents the new fragrance Pretty. The Pretty scent is ageless and timeless. It's a fragrance all women can relate to.

Estée Lauder invites you to discover three new ways to enjoy **Estée Lauder** refreshing splashes light enough to wear all over your body – Baie Rose Peony Splash, Jasmine Violet Splash and Sandalwood Amber Splash.

You are almost on your way to enjoying the prettiest time of year. Your nails need some attention to the change in climate, so make sure to keep them strong with **OPI** Envy Express Kit. These are mini-size bottles that contain a Natural Nail Strengthener, Maintenance Nail Strengthener and Drip Dry Laquer Drying Drops. Their travel friendly size lets you take them wherever your hectic schedule takes you.

Have fun with all these wonderful products and tips and most importantly enjoy!

Scarves are versatile accessories for all seasons

By ANITA SZABADI-GOTTESMAN
Special to The CJN

My sister always says that she feels warmer no matter what the season when she throws a scarf around her neck.

While that may be true throughout many of our changing seasons, the scarf is not just for warmth anymore. Worn by young girls, grandmothers, fashion leaders and Hollywood icons, the scarf has now become the must-have accessory throughout all four seasons.

Available in a dizzying array of fabrics ranging from traditional silk, rayon, wool, linen, polyester, jacquard, stretch jersey and so many mixes crossing all categories, the scarf is about as versatile a fashion item as any can get. Throwing on a camisole, blazer and sunglasses, designer or otherwise, and topping it all off with a scarf changes the look and feel of any outfit.

Who can forget the image of Grace Kelly, long silk scarf tied around her neck blowing in the wind, in her convertible driving along the cliffs of Europe?

Designers have always seen the beauty in scarves, with Versace setting the standard with his line of colourful silk squares. Most of Europe's fashion houses have scarves in their spring and indeed yearly collections, including Gucci, Emilio Pucci, Dolce & Gabbana and Burberry. Knock-offs have hit every retailer from the popular mall shops to more exclusive boutiques.

Transitioning from spring to summer sees the addition of colourful scarves in flowing, gauzy fabric. Scarves have become so much of a fashion statement for spring and summer that the newest look features the standard halter or sleeveless shirt topped with a fashion-forward scarf.

Scarves sporting iconic symbols such as peace signs make wearing a scarf a fun accessory for teens and tweens.

Try tying an animal-print scarf to a purse to create a signature look.
[Anita Szabadi-Gottesman photos]

A scarf can be worn in so many different ways. It can be wrapped once around the neck, or you can create a loop or a plain drape to make a signature look. Dress up a scarf with a brooch – an elegant pearl or hand-set marquisate or a whimsical ceramic piece. Use a scarf as a belt to dress up an old pair of pants, tying a bow at the waist or just letting the edges fall where they may. If a summer's day is too warm and sticky to sport a scarf, tie it to your purse as your personal fashion statement.

Fabric choice can also spice up the look. Animal prints of all sizes and colours add just that touch of fun to any outfit. The colours of spring have been combined with cheetah and zebra patterns to create scarves that can be paired with a conservative suit or a pair of weekend jeans.

Florals and geometrics are big. The biggest trend to hit this year's runway is scarves with themes. Making a statement by wearing a scarf replete with peace signs or other iconic symbols is a favourite of the younger set.

Breaking out of the traditional patterned, discreet scarf style and colours has allowed the scarf to reach across all generations, including the teen and preteen group. For baby boomers, it is amazing to see all the teens and tweens sporting scarves in a multitude of tie-dye patterns across the entire colour palette.

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A poet turns 100

By NORMAN RAVVIN

The market for bronze was up, while other things – oil, silver, stock in major American banks – were trading low. This news found its way to Montreal vandals, leading them to pop the historical plaques off park monuments on the east side of the city. Who it was that was waiting to buy these as scrap to melt down remained a mystery.

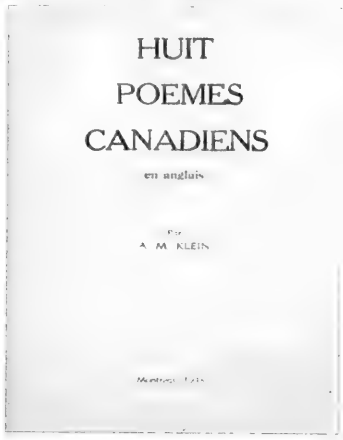
Norman Ravvin

At the same time, news came that A.M. Klein, born 100 years ago, whose active career as a poet, novelist, journalist and would-be politico waned in the early 1950s, would be honoured with one of the familiar bronze plaques mounted by the Federal Board for Historic Sites and Monuments at his former home on Hutchison near Laurier. Other "National Historic Persons" designated along with Klein included his compatriot, the Yiddish publisher Hirsch Wolofsky, Alexander (Boss) Gibson, the manufacturing baron who lorded over an empire in Marysville, near Fredericton, and communications theorist Marshall McLuhan.

Canadian Jewish history has been set in bronze elsewhere by the federal government, notably near Hirsch in southern Saskatchewan, where the phenomenon of Jewish prairie farming colonies is commemorated by a plaque posted at the site of the cemetery that served the colonists.

The bronze mounted on Hutchison will contribute to the ongoing shifts in our understanding and reception of Klein, who was an omnipresent figure on the Montreal scene in the 1930s and '40s. In the decades since his death in 1972, Klein's presence on our literary landscape has been marked most notably by regard for his 1948 Governor General's Award-winning collection, The Rocking Chair and Other Poems, and for his 1951 novel The Second Scroll. He has been viewed as a mentor and model to younger poets, yet one would be hard pressed to find a young poet who modelled himself on Klein, whether on his persona or his poetic motifs.

The renaissance of interest in Klein in recent years runs tandem with a renaissance in cultural affairs in his home city. Montreal's economic and cultural recovery is solid, and Klein's interest in crossing cultural lines provides a satisfying example of the way a truly multicultural city operates (not necessarily in any official way, but through the efforts of its writers, its boulevardiers, and, even, its graffiti artists and talk-show hosts).



A remarkable document, prescient of all this, which would look nice set in bronze, is titled Huit Poemes Canadiens (en anglais) par A.M. Klein. An unacknowledged publication of the Canadian Jewish Congress, it was printed in 1948 in order to further French-Jewish relations in the postwar era.

The pamphlet is made up of just 16 pages – heavy paper stapled and folded. Its contents include eight of Klein's poems from the Rocking Chair period, along with introductory remarks in French by a writer associated with La Presse newspaper. But most remarkable is the author's French-language note heading a poem titled Parade of St. Jean Baptiste, in which he outlines his poetic goals. The note, translated, reads as follows: "This poem, one in a series of attempts, can be interpreted as a bilingual language, since the vocabulary of the poetry is closer in origin to Latin and Normandy. Each of the words, with the exception of articles and auxiliaries, have a sound similar to one among French words – words that are very close to each other in the two languages."

Imagine the uniqueness of Klein's undertaking, however minor its effects, in the still unsettled postwar moment when no one had yet heard of a thing called multiculturalism. His poem, credted of an imagined "langage bilingue," begins this way: "Bannered, and ranked, and at its stances fixed/ the enfilade with vestment colours the air./ Roll now the batons of the tambours round/ ruminant with commencement, and now sound/ annunciative, ultramontane, the/ fanfares of jubilee!"

Parade of St. Jean Baptiste is not exactly a poem for the masses, though it is a celebration of the people. Huit Poemes Canadiens is generally found only in archival collections. As a contribution to Canadian letters, it is like almost nothing else.

Norman Ravvin is chair of the Concordia University Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies.

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Parade of St. Jean Baptiste

Ce poème, l'un d'une série d'essais, peut s'interpréter comme un "langage bilingue" quoique le vocabulaire de la poésie est plutôt d'origine latine et Normande. Chacun des mots (à l'exception toutefois d'articles ou de mots auxiliaires) ont une consonnance synonyme à ceux de la langue française. — A.M.K.

Bannered, and ranked, and at its stances fixed
the enfilade with vestment colors the air.
Roll now the batons of the tambours round
ruminant with commencement, and now sound
annunciative, ultramontane, the
fanfares of jubilee!
It moves: festive and puissant the chivalry
advances chief, law crouped and curvetting—
finish and force, undulant muscle and braid—
O centaurs en gambade!

They move as through a garden, moving between
gay altitudes of flowers, populous
of all the wards and counties burgeoning here:
ribbons and countenances, joys and colors—
nuances of meridian, the blue
the rose, the vert, the blond, all lambencies
to this rich spectacle turned heliotropic,
graceful and levitant: Quebec, its people:
flotation of faces; badinage of petals:
profound from suburbs surfaced on
the Real to spy Imagination.

Applause! Ovation of hourras! There pass
before the flowering faces, imaged, the
animal fables, myths of the crayon'd class,
the nursery's voyage and discovery:
redeemed and painted is the Indian;
lake sirens chant again; and sorcery
again makes princess out of Cendrillon,
(by Massicotte, research; and courtesy
of Simpson's and of Eaton T. and Son)
last! last! the coachmen of classe-galerie.
Oh, all, — parents, their infant epaulettes —
Here all are dauphins of a vanished empery.

Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

TORONTO JEWISH FILM SOCIETY PRESENTS LIES MY FATHER TOLD ME

The Toronto Jewish Film Society presents two screenings of Lies My Father Told Me (Canada, 1975, 102 minutes), a Canadian film classic with **Yossi Yadin**, **Marilyn Lightstone**, **Len Birman** and **Jeff Lynas**. A touching story of a boy caught between his traditional grandfather and modern-minded father set in Montreal of the 1920s, the film is lovingly rendered and beautifully acted.

Adam Fuerstenberg

Lightstone and producer **Harry Gulkin** will be on hand to discuss the film. Sunday, April 5, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. $15 general admission. Rush tickets available at the door 15 minutes before each screening.

* * *

Museum Watch: A Fossil Paradise: The Discovery of the Burgess Shale by Charles D. Walcott continues at the Royal Ontario Museum until April 26. The exhibit marks the 100th anniversary of the discovery of the Burgess Shale, one of the oldest and best-preserved deposits of complex, multicellular soft-bodied animals in the world. The 505-million-year-old deposit was unearthed in British Columbia's Rocky Mountains in 1909.

Eli Rubenstein

* * *

Shpiel or No Shpiel: Friends of Yiddish presents Shpiel or No Shpiel, an afternoon of music trivia and performance with **Mitch Smolkin**, **Nina Shapilsky** and **Jack Newman**. Members free, guests $5. Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Sunday, March 29, 2 p.m. RSVP, Sandy Bokser 416-736-8073 or 416-548-1440.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• The Winchevsky Centre welcomes acclaimed Yiddish singer **Adrienne Cooper** to its secular community annual third Passover seder, along with singer **David Wall** and pianist **Marilyn Lerner**. Includes a Haggadah reading, music, drama and a traditional full-course Passover dinner. Open to the public. Adults $45, students and unwaged $30, children $25 and $30. Villa Columbo, 40 Playfair Ave. Saturday, April 11, 4:30 p.m. 416-789-5502, www.winchevskycentre.org

• Active Seniors presents The Life and Work of Mordecai Richler, Satirist, Social Critic, with **Adam Fuerstenberg**. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday March 26, 1:30 p.m.

• "Jews and Baseball" is a presentation and discussion with **Charles Novogrodsky**, with a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the song Take Me Out To the Ball Game with **Mitch Smolkin**. $9 includes a light breakfast. Miles Nadal JCC, Sunday, March 29, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 154

• **Because God Loves Stories:** The Alec Gelcer Memorial Concert is an evening of stories and music with host **Dan Yashinsky** and featured storyteller **Ralph Benmergui**. With stories by **Eli Rubenstein** and music by **Mayumi Seiler** and **Ernie Tollar**. Co-sponsored by Storytelling Toronto and the MNjcc. $15, $12, at the door or from the Toronto Festival of Storytelling. Tuesday, March 31, 8 p.m. www.torontofestivalofstorytelling.ca

• The Toronto Jewish Film Festival is seeking volunteers for the 2009 festival, which takes place from April 18 to 26. If you are looking for a fun thing to do, see a free film and get a free T-shirt, become a festival volunteer. E-mail volunteer@tjff.ca.

* * *

At the Galleries: Segments of the world-famous Dead Sea Scrolls go on display at the Royal Ontario Museum this summer. The exhibition Dead Sea Scrolls: Words That Changed the World opens at the ROM on June 27 and remains on display until Jan. 3, 2010.

A portion of The Dead Sea Scrolls

PBS documentary centres on Jerusalem

Compiled by CJN Staff

Jerusalem: Center of the World, the two-hour documentary by Emmy-Award-winning director Andrew Goldberg, airs on PBS television in HD on April 1 at 9 p.m.

Host Ray Suarez, of PBS' The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer, explores the founding of the city and the birth and convergence of the world's three major monotheistic religions.

He lends voice to the key events in Jerusalem's history, as described in the Hebrew and Christian bibles, as well as the Talmud, the Haggadah, the Qur'an and the Hadith.

Jerusalem: Center of the World takes viewers beyond the city's exteriors to follow the paths taken by Abraham, David, Jesus and Muhammad.

Highlights include segments focusing on Mount Moriah, site of the First and Second Temples; the Church of the Holy Sepulcher; the Dome of the Rock and the Western Wall.

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Holy Blossom concert features songs of war, peace

By ADAM MICHAEL SEGAL
Special to The CJN

Music has an unparallelled ability to bring people together.

While it is often a force that unites people in pleasure, it can also be a cauldron for raising consciousness.

That is precisely the goal of an upcoming concert at Toronto's Holy Blossom Temple.

Titled Every Mother's Son: Jewish Songs of War and Peace, the show will present a unique blend of war and peace compositions in Yiddish, Hebrew, Ladino and English and will feature acclaimed vocalist Adrienne Cooper and accomplished jazz pianist Marilyn Lerner.

"We have chosen to communicate social advocacy and raise people's consciousness through song," says Freda Ariella Muscovitch, a member of the synagogue's music committee and co-organizer of the concert.

"This particular topic about the enduring human experience of war and the struggle to make peace is extremely powerful and important."

Original compositions highlighting the genres of klezmer, jazz and modern classical music will be performed, as well as songs by Bertholdt Brecht, Kurt Weill, Phil Ochs, Marianne Faithfull and Hanns Eisler.

Will be presented in a multimedia format with translations and visual presentations

The concert will be presented in a multimedia format with translations and visual projections, including abstract images and photography of such dramatic scenes as child soldiers, teen war brides and mothers of children at war.

The images will help to convey the messages of defiance, hope and humour, along with expressions of conflict resolution and the persistence of love during times of war.

"This concert is very much connected to Passover, which is all about redemption and social justice," says Holy Blossom's renowned Cantor Benjamin Maissner.

"The music on its own is incredible, but the theme is especially intriguing."

A poignant moment during the event will be an introductory keynote address by Leonard Levy, an 88-year-old World War II veteran, who is a longtime member of the synagogue, as well as a volunteer with the Memory Project Speaker's Bureau.

"Leonard is known for wearing a sweater that his mother knitted for him before he went off to war and that is related to our theme of 'every mother's son,'" says Muscovitch.

"We are very proud to be honouring Jewish war veterans in this manner."

The concert takes place on April 12 at 8 p.m.

For tickets, call Mari Lynn Rusak at 416-789-3291 ext. 224, at the temple.

World War II veteran Leonard Levy will give the keynote address at a concert intended to "raise people's consciousness through song."

Emil Sher's play raises ethical issues

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

The 1990s controversy over Robert Latimer's killing his severely disabled daughter inspired Emil Sher to write Mourning Dove – first for radio, then for stage.

"I was commissioned to write the play while working as a story editor on CBC Radio's Morningside with host Peter Gzowski. I remember being struck by how thick the transcripts of the trial were – the size of small city phone books," Sher recalled on the phone from his Toronto office.

On Oct. 24, 1993, when Saskatchewan farmer Robert Latimer killed his daughter, Tracy, the debate began. Does a parent have the right to kill a child? Latimer was convinced he did the right thing, since 12-year-old Tracy was suffering from cerebral palsy, weighed 38 pounds and was about to undergo another surgery to relieve pain.

Compelled by broader issues rather than the specifics of Latimer's case, Sher created Mourning Dove, the fictitious world of the Ramsays – Doug and Sandra, their severely disabled daughter, Tina – and Keith, an intellectually challenged friend of the family employed in Doug's hardware store.

Although the play is set in a home workshop rather than in a courtroom, once Ramsay takes Tina's life, which he is convinced is the best thing he can do for her, a trial within the family begins. What Ramsay doesn't expect is the fallout from his wife and the reaction of Keith, who gives voice to the other side of the argument.

After the CBC radio broadcast in 1996 and broadcasts on Worldplay, an inaugural radio festival heard around the world, Sher, an award-winning playwright, adapted it for stage productions in Ottawa, Kitchener, Halifax and last fall, Vancouver.

Presented by the Ark Collective, Mourning Dove makes its Toronto première on Tuesday, April 7, at 8 p.m. at the Tarragon Theatre Extra Space, directed by Dora Award-winning actor Liza Balkan. Cast members include Steve Cumyn, Vickie Papavs, Colin Doyle and Kimwun Perehinec.

Sher initially resisted adapting the play to theatre. "I didn't know how I was going to show this young girl on stage, but when I realized I didn't have to – that she could be created through sound and light, then I worked with Richard Rose [a director and the founding artistic director of Toronto's Necessary Angel Theatre], and turned it into a stage play."

Using elements of radio drama – sound and voice – Sher has the audience hear Tina breathing, but she never appears on stage.

"It's not about showing this handicapped girl," Sher said. "It's about how the family copes with Tina's debilitating disability. It also raises the larger issue: to what extent are we spirit over flesh and what makes us who we are? Is it our bodies as contorted as they may be or is it the soul within? I'm always trying to bring in additional layers to leave the audience thinking."

What's Sher currently working on? He's been commissioned by Joel Greenberg of Studio 180, where Sher is playwright in residence, to write Conviction, about wrongful convictions.

Greenberg's daughter, Jessica, played Hana in Sher's adaptation of Karen Levine's Hana's Suitcase about 12-year-old Holocaust victim Hana Brady. The play toured Canada and the United States and will be staged in Israel in 2010.

Sher is also weaving documentary footage from Larry Weinstein's Inside Hana's Suitcase into interactive webisodes for the upcoming website. Weinstein's film will be screened at upcoming Toronto festivals.

For information about Sher, visit www.emilsher.com

Mourning Dove previews April 3 and runs April 7 to 11. For tickets, call Tarragon Theatre Extra Space, 30 Bridgman Ave., 416-531-1827.

Actor, political activist Ron Silver dies

JTA

JERUSALEM — Ron Silver, an award-winning actor and co-founder of an organization calling for a united Jerusalem, has died.

Silver, who won a Tony Award for his performance in Speed-the-Plow, died March 15 in New York City two years after being diagnosed with esophageal cancer. He was 62.

In 2000, Silver co-founded the One Jerusalem organization, calling for a united Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, in opposition to the Oslo peace accords.

He was a liberal activist who helped found the Creative Coalition, an arts-oriented political group, in 1989. After the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, he switched his party affiliation from Democrat to independent and became a public supporter of former U.S. president George W. Bush. He was a featured speaker at the 2004 Republican National Convention.

Ron Silver

He began hosting the Ron Silver Show, a weekly politics and public affairs radio program, on Sirius Satellite Radio in February 2008.

While Silver won a Tony in 1988 for his portrayal of Hollywood producer Charlie Fox in the David Mamet play, he also excelled as a film and television actor. Silver was nominated for an Emmy Award as Bruno Gianelli on The West Wing TV series and received acclaim for his portrayal of lawyer Alan Dershowitz, a staunch Israel advocate, in the 1990 film Reversal of Fortune.

Amazing mentalist understands power of suggestion

By RITA POLIAKOV
Special to The CJN

I'm given a piece of piece of paper and told to draw something on it. I wander down the halls of WestWind Pictures in search of an empty room and get to work. I consider drawing a heart or a triangle, but that seems too easy. Eventually, I settle on a poorly drawn car.

"Don't show me the drawing. Fold it up and put it in your pocket," says Haim Goldenberg, a mentalist who, I'm told, has just bent a spoon using nothing but his mind. Back in the boardroom, Goldenberg tells me to picture my drawing and think of a colour. I think of yellow. He guesses blue.

Haim Goldenberg

"What hand do you write with?" he asks, unfazed by his incorrect guess. I answer and he tells me to grasp his wrist with my right hand. Focusing hard, he begins moving his hands, slowly making a half circle. He'll never get it, I think. He stops, pulls out a piece of paper and draws something. It's a car, almost identical to the drawing in my pocket.

Goldenberg has been a mentalist since he was eight years old, and has been practising since he was six, when he first saw Israeli mentalist Uri Geller.

"He took a spoon and bent it… he said everyone can do it… I believed it. I took a spoon and tried to do it and nothing happened," he said. Goldenberg practised every day for two years until finally, when he was eight years old, the spoon bent, just a little.

"I tried more and more... I didn't go to school [that day], I went on the street and tried to read minds," he said, adding that he was mostly unsuccessful.

Since then, Goldenberg has honed his talents. He's performed in Israel and internationally, including at the world's largest magic convention in New York. Using his mental powers, Goldenberg has driven through traffic blindfolded and stopped his own pulse while at the Hospital for Sick Children. And soon, he'll star in his own reality show.

Goldmind, which airs on March 22 on TVtropolis, follows the Israeli-born mentalist around the city as he connects with ordinary Torontonians. In the series, Goldenberg forces an artist to omit the CN tower while sketching Toronto's skyline, visits a passerby's house through the person's memories and stops a gym-buff from lifting his weights, all with the power of his mind.

"Mentalism is to put information in the mind and take [information]… It's like a conversation with someone in a different way. I believe anyone can do it," he said. "I don't have supernatural powers – the only power we have is the power of believing."

Goldenberg encourages skeptics to come on the show. While in the development process, he estimated that there would be a 50-50 success rate, but was surprised to find that the ratio was closer to 80-20.

"I know how to choose the people… I have psychological tricks to make you choose something," he said.

A large part of Goldenberg's show is explaining the process of his demonstration and the power of suggestion. In one episode, he invites two businesswomen to his office and offers them more than $100,000 if they write out a cheque for any number but the one that he has written on his cheque. When the two cheques match, he takes the women through the building, pointing out every spot where that number appears.

The show is produced by WestWind Pictures, the same company that produces Little Mosque on the Prairie and Designer Guys. For Mary Darling, executive producer and CEO of WestWind Pictures, GoldMind's appeal lies in Goldenberg's optimism.

"It's positive reality – it's not voting someone off the island," she said. "There really is an openness… a togetherness. We refer to him as an opera-friendly mentalist."

Goldmind premières on March 22 and will air Sundays at 6 and 9 p.m. on TVtropolis.

Charlie Brown's back in town

By ADAM MICHAEL SEGAL
Special to The CJN

Charlie Brown and the Peanuts crew are probably some of the most beloved comic strip characters ever.

As entertaining as the group were as kids, imagine what they'd be like as teenagers?

That's what Dog Sees God explores.

The off-Broadway play is a parody of CB and friends and is now making its Canadian première run at Toronto's Six Degrees nightclub.

The show features a number of esteemed Canadian performers, including Jake Epstein from Degrassi: The Next Generation, Adamo Ruggiero, Mike Lobel, Paula Brancati and Tatiana Maslany.

"Fast forwarding the lives of the Peanuts' characters… makes the whole play that much more interesting," says Epstein, who plays the leadrole of CB.

"I want audiences to be moved and entertained."

The Dog Sees God storyline centres on CB's experience with losing his dog to rabies and questioning whether there is, in fact, an afterlife.

The time of grief and doubt is initially compounded by the fact that CB can't count on the people closest to him, as they are all grappling with their own, very real teenage issues, including drug problems, the search for self and eating disorders.

But he connects with an old, forgotten friend and their relationship is central to the plot.

"Every teenager can relate to the issues discussed in this play," says Epstein, 22.

"The play raises awareness of these issues, but doesn't 'preach' any message. It lets teenagers know that yes, it is really hard being a teenager, and that as a teenager, you're not alone on these issues…I'm hoping teenagers that come will see how theatre can be relevant, funny, dark and moving."

The Toronto-born and raised actor has been honing his craft since he was 10.

In addition to a diverse array of productions at school, Epstein gained experience performing in such well-known productions as Our Town and Oliver, and was a regular on the Fox Family series The Zack Files.

Stardom struck during the Degrassi years, which yielded the talented thespian a Gemini Award and subsequent nomination, as well as a Young Artist Award nomination.

"Degrassi was a huge part of my growing up," says Epstein, who played the lead character of Craig Manning on the popular show.

"I got the role on the show in my first year of high school... so my high school years are absolutely linked to working on Degrassi. I think the show has a lot of heart, and I loved the feeling of being part of something important – something that helped other teenagers get through really tough times or at least know that they weren't alone."

Although the show brought Epstein a certain degree of fame and celebrity status, his solid Jewish upbringing and down-to-earth values have clearly kept him self-aware and appreciative.

"From being on Degrassi for five years, I learned the importance of being true to who you are," Epstein reflects.

"Fame is like an abstract painting. People see you and think you can be all sorts of things… [That's why] it's important to be happy with yourself, without a TV show defining you."

Since his time on the show, Epstein has studied at the National Theatre School of Canada and has appeared in such shows as Dangerous Liaisons and Cinderella.

As for the future, Epstein has his sights set on the Big Apple.

"Five years from now, I hope to be living somewhere exciting – maybe New York – performing on Broadway. That's the dream."

Dog Sees God is on until April 4. For tickets, call 1-888-222-6608 or visit online at www.dogseesgod.ca or www.ticketweb.ca.

Kolel's new Israel tours

Kolel, the Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning, is offering a new summer tour to Israel, July 19 to 29, led by Rabbi Elyse Goldstein. The activity-packed itinerary includes sites in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, the Galilee and Golan and is geared for first-timer couples, singles and families with post-bar and bat mitzvah teens. Free information meeting, Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, Monday, March 30, 8 p.m.

Back by popular demand is Rabbi Goldstein's Women's Inward Bound Tour, a spiritual and physical experience including yoga, drumming in the desert, meditation, biking, hiking, rafting, and of course meeting extraordinary women. Travel dates are Nov. 15 to 23. Free information meeting at BJCC Monday, May 4, 8 p.m. 416-636-1880, ext. 472, www.kolel.org.

– Bill Gladstone

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Aish in the Annex

'No pressure' Aish in the Annex welcomes Jewish youths from all backgrounds

By RITA POLIAKOV
Special to Heebonics

The key to Aish's new outreach centre on Spadina Road is more than just education and socializing. It's chocolate.

"All I do is eat chocolate with people," said Chana Goldstein of her one-on-one lessons on Jewish philosophy.

She and her husband, Rabbi Mitch Goldstein, are the leaders of Aish in the Annex, a new branch of Aish, an outreach program for Jewish youth. Aish in the Annex hopes to reach young Jews in downtown Toronto. The program mixes social nights with education and includes a Maimonides Leaders Fellowship, a 10-week program that pays students $500 to attend lectures.

The Goldsteins, who have been running Aish in the Annex since its inception six months ago, were originally born in England and completed their rabbinical studies in Israel.

"I fell in love with Israel," Rabbi Goldstein said. "Studying at a rabbinical school in Israel, it's a different experience. You're in a place where it all happened, it's like studying in Rome... for Roman history."

After spending six years in Israel, the couple was selected to work for a branch of the Jewish Awareness Movement, a Jewish outreach organization in Santa Barbara, Calif.

"However disconnected [you] think Jewish youth are [here], until you lived in California, you have no idea," Chana said. "They just know nothing. [They asked], 'What is kosher? I heard of it on Seinfeld.' There's zero Jewish identity. It was a lot more extreme out there."

The couple decided to leave California when their son, Moshe, reached school age, said Rabbi Goldstein.

"Santa Barbara is a beautiful place... I wanted [my son] to get Jewish schooling, which is not available in Santa Barbara," he said. "We lived on campus, in the student area – there were no other children his age."

After visiting Toronto on vacation, they decided to settle there.

"I saw how warm it was," Rabbi Goldstein said. "The reason we chose Toronto is the people. They're very genuine."

While in Santa Barbara, Chana began giving one-on-one lessons to Jewish youth.

"I was so intimidated with the situation, I was terrified," said Chana, who received a law degree in England. "My husband said, 'What do you like to do?' I said, 'I like eating chocolate.'"

And the chocolate box was born. From the corner of the centre's living room, Chana reaches for a light blue box brimming with sweets. A red word, "inspiration," hangs on the side.

"It's 50 per cent information and 50 per cent inspiration," Rabbi Goldstein said. "We're very outgoing and fun. Our programming is very cutting edge and enjoyable – there's a no-pressure environment."

Aish in the Annex includes weekly Shabbat dinners, Tuesday night socials, a Hebrew café where participants can practice the language, and classes on topics like love and happiness. The program also includes guest speakers for young professionals on issues like financial success in the recession and social networking.

But mainly, Aish in the Annex is a place where Jewish youths from all backgrounds can feel comfortable.

"Some people come and just want to hang out," Goldstein said. "It's just their environment, it's on their turf... In a synagogue, they sometimes feel like it's not their territory, they're not relaxed, they're not in their element."

Maiya Keidan, a third-year Ryerson University student and Aish member, agrees.

"There's a comfort level... I come from a secular background. I always feel like people are judging me, I don't feel like that here," she said. "It's a different way of approaching Judaism."

For Naomi Haworth, 23, the Goldsteins are key in creating this comfort level.

"The Goldsteins, they're fun to hang out with, they're really inviting," said the York University graduate. "It's relaxed, it's like a home."

Chana's cooking doesn't hurt, either.

"Have you found the chocolate cookies?" Haworth asked. "They're called crack cookies for a reason."

Rabbi Goldstein, 28, believes that his age also helps him relate to students, who are usually 18 to 22 years old, and young professionals, who are aged 22 and up.

"I'm not a particularly old person... I understand what people like because I'm them. It's not like I'm 50 years old," he said.

What makes the Goldsteins unique is their insistence on being genuine, no matter what the situation. After living in California, Chana realized the importance of being herself.

While there, she got to tour the set of E.R.

"It wrecked E.R. for me. I walked around the ambulance bay...it looked so real, but as soon as you walk through the doors, it's just a picture," she said.

"I think it's all about being yourself... people are sick of fake. [It's] the biggest lesson I learned in California."

For the Goldsteins, this isn't difficult.

"We have an inability to be anything than ourselves," Chana said.

Chana Goldstein and Rabbi Mitch Goldstein moved to Toronto with their son, Moshe, to run Aish in the Annex.

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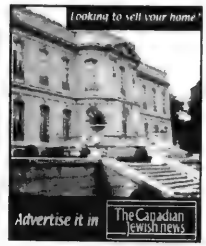

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Coast to Coast

Winnipeg federation joins Mideast public relations war

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

Shelley Faintuch, left, and Abby Morris display Israel advocacy material at the educators workshop. [Myron Love photo]

WINNIPEG — A public relations war is being waged between Israel and the Palestinians, and the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg is going on the offensive.

Over the past few months, the federation's community relations committee, chaired by Abby Morris, has been forming coalitions with university professors, other educators and other community organizations to combat the rising tide of anti-Israel propaganda that is threatening to wash away goodwill for Israel in the West.

"Over the past year, it has become increasingly difficult for us to counter the growing media bias and advocate for Israel," Shelley Faintuch, the federation's community relations director, told a group of primarily Jewish educators at the Asper Jewish Community Campus.

They were there to get some ideas from Faintuch on how to better inform their students and themselves about the ongoing Mideast conflict.

"It has been especially difficult in the last two months. When Israel first launched Operation Cast Lead and sent the army into Gaza, there was widespread support for the operation in the western world. But as reported Palestinian casualties mounted, that support rapidly dissipated," Faintuch said.

The evening began with a presentation by Erez Rotem, the Jewish National Fund shaliach for the Prairie region. A former Israeli journalist, he spoke about the necessity of focusing Israel education programs on the young. He said a double standard existed in reporting news from the Mideast by many western media outlets, and he contrasted Israeli news coverage of the fighting in Gaza with what was presented on Al-Jazeera. He also showed film clips of a Qassam missile strike on a house in Sderot and of Sderot children running for shelter to escape a missile attack.

Faintuch distributed a pamphlet titled Apartheid for Dummies, which referred to Israeli Apartheid Week. Last week, Israeli Apartheid Week was held at about 40 campuses across North America, but not on Manitoba university campuses.

"We have been living in a calm environment in Winnipeg up to now. We are just beginning to experience what Jewish communities out east have been experiencing for some time," Faintuch said.

She said that the community relations committee is trying to ensure that Winnipeg panel discussions on the Mideast conflict have pro-Israel representation.

The committee is bringing in counterterrorism expert Amos Guiora and Israel-Arab journalist Khaled Abu Toameh to speak on the local campuses to counter speaking tours by anti-Israel activists such as Jeff Halper, the co-founder of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, who was recently in Winnipeg.

"We are trying to emphasize in our discussions with the universities their responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment for learning for the students who pay to attend. Many Canadian universities are failing in that duty," Morris said.

Faintuch and Rotem said that educators should show the positive side of life in Israel – the technological and medical achievements, the beauty of nature and the sheer joy of life in the country – to students, instead of simply countering media attacks on Israel.

Yolanda Papini Pollock, a grade 4 and 5 teacher in the Hebrew bilingual program at Margaret Park School, said she strived to make sure her students get "a balanced view of Israel despite all the negative stuff in the media. We deal with specific issues on a regular basis. It's good to show different aspects of Israel unrelated to the conflict."

Organic community garden holds info night

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

An information night about Kavanah Organic Community Teaching Garden, the community-supported agriculture program (CSA) at the Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan, is set for April 2, 7:30 p.m. at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Kimel Family Education Centre.

The CSA is a partnership between the Kavanah Garden and Daniel Hoffman, who runs Cutting Veg Organic Farm, and caters to individuals or families who receive fresh, local, organically grown produce.

Risa Alyson Strauss, program director of Kavanah Garden, said that Hoffman grows the organic produce at his Brampton-area farm or sources other organic local produce, and delivers it each Thursday from May to November for pick-up at the garden.

Members purchase either a regular ($25) or large share ($35), and are free to choose the produce – the variety depends on the season – that best suits their needs.

Food grown at the garden itself is donated to social service agencies to be distributed to community members who lack access to fresh, local, organic produce, Strauss said.

There are 30 other Jewish communities across North America – there are two other CSA's in Toronto, at the First Narayever and Beth Radom congregations – that have "committed to putting Jewish purchasing power behind our local farmers," Strauss said.

For details about the information night, when prospective members can meet Hoffman, call 647-388-7444, or e-mail daniel@thecuttingveg.com, or visit www.torathateva.org.

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CHAT Cougars win York Region hockey championship

The TanenbaumCHAT Kimel Centre (TCK) Cougars defeated the league-leading St. Robert Rams in a best-of-three final to win the York Region Athletic Association (YRAA) senior Tier 2 boys hockey championship.

TCK needed an overtime goal from Sean Cheskes to squeeze out a 5-4 win to capture the championship against the undefeated Rams.

The Rams opened the series with a 6-2 victory over the Cougars in a game played at Clatworthy Arena. TanenbaumCHAT came back in Game 2, played at Elgin Barrow East, winning 5-3 and forcing the decisive Game 3.

St. Robert scored early in the title match – only two minutes in – and continued to pour on the pressure, but goalie Sam Manley barred the door and kept the Cougars within one goal.

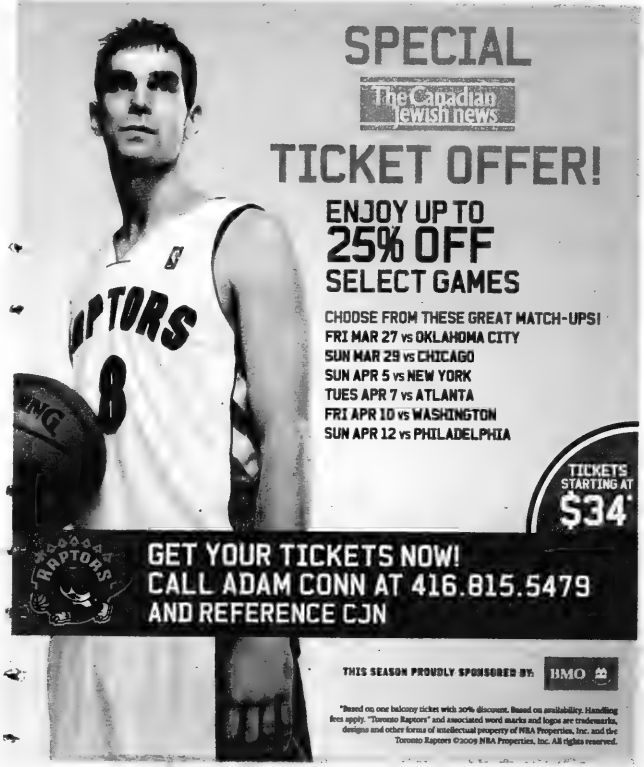
Ray Abramson got the tying goal in the second, though his shot appeared to hit the crossbar and stay out. Play continued and after a minute the referees blew the whistle, discussed the play and called it a goal. That would be the Cougar's only bright spot in a second period dominated by St. Robert, which scored three goals to make the game 4-1.

Despite feeling dejected, the Cougars, coached by Adam Chaim and Jeff Borsuk, didn't give up. Sean Cheskes began the Cougars' rally, scoring two goals two minutes apart in the middle of the third period.

Trailing 4-3, the Cougars were awarded several power plays, but couldn't capitalize on the man advantage. With time winding down, however, Cheskes centred the puck to Matthew Lewenberg, who one-timed it into the net to tie the game. There was just 1:09 left on the clock.

There was no further scoring during regulation time, but in overtime, Cheskes came through again, capitalizing on a blind pass from David Garbuz for the hat-trick, game winner, series clincher and YRAA championship.

CHAT Cougars celebrate after winning hockey championship.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Beukeboom to replace Pierre McGuire behind Canada bench

Summer tournament set for Metulla

One of the most decorated players in modern National Hockey League history will coach Team Canada Red in this summer's World Jewish Hockey Tournament.

Jeff Beukeboom, who won four Stanley Cup championships in his 16-year NHL career, will replace Pierre McGuire, who dropped out of the tournament due to personal and professional commitments.

"I'm sorry to be giving up this opportunity," said McGuire. "I really wanted to be part of this. But if I can't go, I can't imagine being replaced by anyone better than Jeff Beukeboom."

Beukeboom, 44, a close friend of Canada White coach Steve Thomas, won three Cups with the Edmonton Oilers and a fourth playing alongside Brian Leetch with the New York Rangers. Since his retirement from playing, he has coached AAA hockey and is currently an assistant coach with the Barrie Colts of the OHL.

"I'm very excited to be part of this," said Beukeboom. "This is a rare opportunity, both for hockey and for me, personally."

Beukeboom's son, Brock, a defenceman in the OHL, is considered likely to follow in his father's footsteps as a coming first round pick in the NHL. Beukeboom, himself was the 19th pick overall in the 1983 NHL entry draft, which included Hall of Fame players Steve Yzerman, Pat LaFontaine and Cam Neely.

The World Jewish Hockey Tournament will be held in Metulla, Israel, from July 5 to 15, featuring teams from Canada, the United States, Russia, France and Israel.

Lights! Camera! Peace?

ALMOST FAMOUS

By Jacob Medjuck

Six weeks in Los Angeles and you can forget the studios. I'm ready to pitch the U.S. Congress: Sodom and Gomorrah may have been onto something.

Welcome to the movie business. You can adopt a daughter and then have sex with her. You can drive your car into your neighbour's kid's birthday party and hit the piñata with your windshield. Your head shot can be your DUI mug shot. You can do drugs at the office – in your office, in a meeting – and still get work, and even win awards! And be on magazine covers (newsstand, not grocery checkout racks)!

If you tried any of this while working at a school, dentist's office or library, you'd never work there again. But in the film business, it's par for the course. It's tolerated – almost expected.

I had a meeting last week in which I pitched a film. It went great!

I had a great time. The executive had a great time. I told my manager that everything was great!

My manager corrected me. "It was not great."

I felt gobsmacked. "What?"

"They didn't like you," he said.

"But they seemed to. They even said so," I protested.

"They lied. I spoke to them. Didn't like you."

Wow.

Welcome To Hollywood, Part 2: when they say to your face, "We don't like you, and we don't like your ideas," you know for sure they don't like you. But when they say, "We 100 per cent do like you," they 100 per cent still may not like you.

To save your self-esteem, logically it would seem safest to work on the principle "words are empty," and only if they buy your work does romance then bloom.

I instantly recalled the awful feeling from moments in my youth of not being liked. But it's one thing to wonder if I'll be alone at the prom. Now I was concerned that I wouldn't have a career.

I asked, "If they don't like me, who will read my scripts?"

My manager replied, "They will read your scripts. They will buy them and make them."

"Even if they don't like me?"

"Even if they hate you," he said. "They will work with you intimately for years, developing your ideas creatively, then shoot, edit and market the juggernaut. And you will all be rich, or you'll bond in failure. If the script is good, if a star circles, you will work, even if they hate you."

Welcome to the film industry. They will celebrate you even if they hate you. They will build an empire around your disagreeable behaviour. And they will graciously ignore your conflicted ethics and theological beliefs.

Hollywood isn't fake or phony. It's genius. Genius. Hollywood is a very successful, productive and creative industry with a glamorous brand that's revered worldwide.

The Hollywood studio system could serve as an actual working model to solve the Middle East crisis.

I've said it, and I mean it. Pitch that at Camp David.

By the rivers of Babylon, build a movie studio.

Film in Israel, edit in Egypt. Sound mix in Syria, use Gazan key grips (lighting), and handle marketing in Lebanon (consider that the Lebanese have already a tremendous marketing/distribution network via courteous corner stores across the globe).

People who hate each other would work side by side – does the dream sound familiar? Batman could save Gotham City, and in doing so, the Middle East.

Turtles grew shells. Fish grew gills. And the studio organism evolved to integrate peoples of contrasting ethics and practices to build crystal castles and not towers of Babel.

So there's your road map to peace.

Just don't mention that the architects (Samuel Goldwyn or Louis B. Mayer, etc.,) were Jews, otherwise the plan will end up on the cutting room floor.

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1 pear, peeled, cored, and chopped
3 apples, peeled, cored, and chopped
3 bananas, peeled and mashed
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2 c sliced or slivered almonds (8 oz)
2 tblsp ground cinammon
1 c sweet red wine
Matzoh

Combine all ingredients in food processor and purée. Transfer mixture to large saucepan and simmer over low heat, stirring frequently, until thickened, about 15 to 20 min. Cool completely, then chill, covered, until cold. Serve with matzoh.

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An uplifting tale of the tape

FITNESS CORNER

By FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

Since we all need a little inspiration these days, I thought I would share a story that inspired me.

About 10 months ago, I met two women whom I'll call Jodi and Sarah. Jodi was a thin woman who wanted to firm up and lose a couple of inches. Sarah was overweight and very inflexible, despite having taken yoga for five years.

Sarah was very distrusting and nervous about weight training, but she was also very tired of not fitting into her clothes and feeling fat. Sarah and I had a very rocky start, she admits now. She was terrified of me and didn't believe I could help her.

After eight weeks working together twice a week, Sarah and Jodi told me they had to buy new jeans, since their old ones didn't fit anymore, but nobody noticed their weight loss. We decided to measure their body fat and were shocked to find that even though they both lost weight, their body fat hadn't changed much, which was very discouraging. Both women started to miss sessions, so I decided to talk to them and convinced them to let me take their body measurements again. We did.

I also decided to change things and concentrate on fun and fast-moving workouts to get them back in the game. The next thing we knew, six months had gone by and we needed to take measurements again. To our collective surprise, both women had lost two inches throughout their bodies, but their waists were the most impressive of all. Jodi's had shrunk from 27 to 25 inches, and Sarah's from 33.5 to a mere 29 inches.

I know that it's my job to produce these kinds of results for my clients, but only through hard work and consistency did they achieve their goals. Today, both women's lives have changed – they're both active and two dress sizes smaller.

What are you waiting for? Get out there, be consistent, work hard and don't give up. You, too, can do it.

Want to learn more? E-mail me at felycesfitness@rogers.com.

Please call the meeting

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

Anti-Semitism.

I'd definitely rather not write about it again. We are weary of living it, and non-Jews seem tired of hearing about it.

But like a bad cousin who won't leave your house, anti-Semitism is our load to carry. It is real. It is fierce.

That being said, I have been calling for a community-wide mobilization strategy. The response, however, has been overwhelming silence. This disturbs me, because our annoying and dangerous cousin is still in the house. She isn't leaving. She has no plans to pack up and leave, nor recognize that her behaviour is damaging, hurtful and destructive.

The silence also disturbs me because the hush means we're missing out on an opportunity to change history. Rarely in the history of our people have we really been prepared to fight anti-Semitism and to befriend those who sincerely respect us, and we them.

But today, with our available resources, strong communal structures, committed volunteers and the easiness and efficiency of e-mail, the Internet and a plethora of other electronic options, our community could take the lead in the Jewish world by creating a plan that could minimize, and perhaps one day eradicate, anti-Semitism and change the complexion of Jewish-non-Jewish relations.

I'm convinced that we need such a plan, and I know we can create one.

I, therefore, shout out once again to our community leaders and members – be they shul-based, institutional or grassroots – to organize a community-wide series of meetings to deal with the planning and implementation of one agenda item: a long-term inclusive strategy for the Jewish people that will strengthen our position and enhance interfaith relations.

The meeting agenda might look like this:

- A dvar Torah (words of Torah and strength). From which denomination? I have no idea.
- A review of why we are here "today" and our short-term and long-term goals.
- Opening statements by a Jewish scholar, Jewish university students, Holocaust survivors, Jewish community professionals involved in fighting anti-Semitism, and parents on what anti-Semitism looks like today. Let's minimize the squeaky-clean and safe sociological lectures that we hear regularly and know well.
- Statements from non-Jews who want to express their brotherhood/sisterhood with us and their desire to work together to break down differences and create sound partnerships.
- A call to the floor for ideas on what a plan to fight anti-Semitism might look like. Microphones can be set up throughout the hall.
- Break-out sessions to deal with a) What does Torah and Judaism say about this issue; b) Structure – what would a plan look like?; c) How do we best include all parts of the Jewish community; d) Tasks; e) How can we use our available resources, such as traditional media and the Internet; f) How do we best reach out to our friends in the non-Jewish world, and g) Followup – the next step. (How about an international conference here in Toronto that would present our plan to others?)

There it is – the agenda. The only organization that can handle the magnitude of such a meeting is UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. They know how to kickstart such a process. There's no time for infighting, so other organizations would have to humbly find their place. Ultimately, the plan should be decentralized, so everyone will be in charge in their own way.

We are no longer in the shtetl bracing for the dreadful anti-Semitic rider to come in and pillage our homes. We are free, and we are rich. Please call the meeting, so I can stop writing about anti-Semitism.

Contact Avrum at http://avrum.net.

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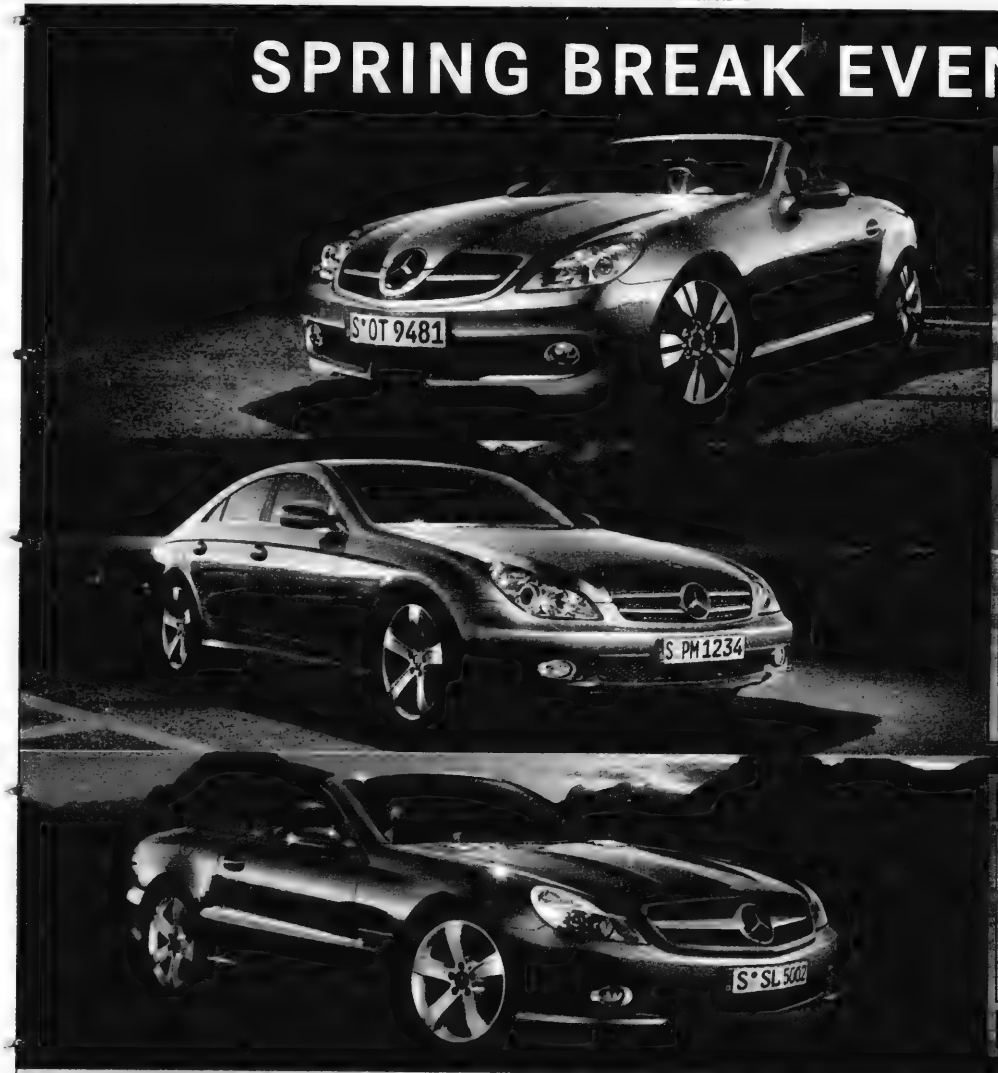

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Netanyahu achieves coalition

By SHAHAR ILAN
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Prime minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu says his government will make every effort to reach "a durable peace with all of Israel's Arab neighbours."

He made the statement in an address to the Knesset in Jerusalem during a special session marking 30 years since the signing of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty on March 26, 1979.

"Whenever Israel stands before a peace-seeking Arab leader, it follows and answers the call," Netanyahu said.

The Likud leader praised late prime minister Menachem Begin and the late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat for "their wisdom in making the impossible possible."

"A bereaved people understands the importance of peace," Netanyahu said, adding that all Israeli governments, no matter what their political orientation, "reach out [a] hand in peace.

"Israelis know how to spot genuine peace whenever it is offered," he said, though he warned that "the real test of peace is in its stability and its durability."

Continued on page 46

Prime minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu, in a photo taken last month, points to himself in anticipation of succesfully completing a coalition government. Netanyahu vowed to engage the Palestinians in peace negotiations. The new coalition government was to be sworn in this week on Tuesday. *[Isranet photo]*

Israel said to have attacked convoy in Sudan

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — The Israeli Air Force used unmanned drones to attack secret Iranian convoys in Sudan that were trying to smuggle weapons to Palestinian militant organizations in the Gaza Strip, the London-based Sunday Times reported Sunday.

Defence officials were quoted as saying that the trucks were carrying missiles capable of striking as far as Tel Aviv and the nuclear reactor in Dimona.

The unmanned aerial vehicles attacked two convoys, killing at least 50 smugglers and their Iranian escorts, the newspaper reported. All the trucks in the convoys were destroyed.

Israel has carried out three air strikes since January against what were believed to be Iranian arms shipments passing through Sudan on their way to Gaza, the American news network ABC reported on Friday.

Earlier last week, Sudanese officials confirmed that in January, in the wake of Israel's assault on Hamas-ruled Gaza, unidentified aircraft attacked a convoy of 17 trucks heading north through eastern Sudan. CBS News reported last Thursday that the IAF was apparently behind the attack.

A U.S. official confirmed to ABC that there were actually three attacks in total. This information matches reports from Sudanese officials of two strikes on truck convoys on Jan. 27 and Feb. 11, and the sinking of a suspected arms ship in the Red Sea.

Israeli officials declined to confirm or deny whether Israel had been involved in an air strike in Sudan.

However, outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert hinted at Israel's suspected role in the reported airstrike.

"We operate everywhere where we can hit terror infrastructure – in close places, in places further away, everywhere where we can hit terror infrastructure, we hit them and we hit them in a way that increases deterrence," said Olmert, speaking at a conference in Herzliya.

Report suggests unmanned drones used in raid.

Please see related story on 45.

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Israel disputes number of Gaza civilian deaths – see page 46

The News in Brief

Canada

Museum To Get Cash

TORONTO — The Ontario government will give $5 million to the Canadian Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg, the Toronto Star reported. Premier Dalton McGuinty made the promise months ago to Gail Asper, chief fundraiser for the museum, the Star said. Due to the recession, the gift will be paid over 10 years. It will be used to tell visitors about the struggle for human rights in Ontario, and to bring Ontario students to visit. The $265-million museum, slated to open in 2012, was the dream of Izzy Asper, the late founder of Canwest Global Communications. Funding for it is coming from government and private donations.

World

Officers Charged

CARACAS — Eight police officers were among those charged in connection with an attack at Caracas' largest synagogue. Venezuelan prosecutors said March 26 that eight officers and three others were charged in the case. Among those accused is the shul rabbi's former bodyguard and one of two security guards on duty during the attack. Assailants broke into the shul, Tiferet Israel, in January, desecrating religious objects, painting anti-Semitic messages on walls and, in a move that particularly worried Jewish leaders, stole records with names and addresses of local Jews. President Hugo Chavez condemned the attack. But Jewish leaders say he's fostering an anti-Semitic climate, particularly with his harsh criticism of Israel, which they said prompted the attack.

Rabbi Slams Remarks

NEW YORK — A Manhattan rabbi condemned a call issued at his synagogue to assassinate Palestinian leaders. Rabbi Elie Abadie of Congregation Edmond J. Safra said the call last month by the leader of an Israeli pro-settler group to kill Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and other "terrorist leaders" is "odious and repugnant." He said the sponsoring group, Americans for a Safe Israel, is no longer welcome to host events at his shul.

School Threatened

CHICAGO — Police in Chicago arrested a man accused of mailing a bomb threat to a Jewish school. Mohammed Alkaramla, 24, a Jordanian national, was arrested March 20. His fingerprints were found on the envelope of the threat and the text of the letter was found on his computer hard drive, the Chicago Tribune reported. The school received the letter in late January. It threatened to detonate bombs at 22 educational centres in Chicago, although none were found. Alkaramla is also under investigation for vandalizing several Chicago-area shuls in early January, allegedly in response to Israel's Gaza operation. He wasn't charged for those crimes when he was arrested March 20. He was released last week on $50,000 bail.

Ahenakew Acquittal Won't Be Appealed

SASKATOON — Justice officials in Saskatchewan say they won't appeal the acquittal of former aboriginal leader David Ahenakew on charges of wilfully promoting hatred against Jews.

"After looking at the judgment, we can't say whether the trial judge committed an error of law or made an unreasonable finding of fact," director of appeals Dean Sinclair told Canadian Press last week.

Ahenakew, the former head of the Assembly of First Nations, was charged after a controversial speech and subsequent interview with a reporter in 2002 in which he called Jews a "disease.... that's going to take over."

He went on to say: "The Jews damn near owned all of Germany prior to the war. That's how Hitler came in. He was going to make damn sure that the Jews didn't take over Germany or Europe."

On Feb. 23, Judge Wilfred Tucker called the comments "disgusting," but said he didn't believe the accused intended to promote hatred.

It was the second trial for Ahenakew, 75, who was found guilty in 2005 of promoting hatred and fined $1,000. The conviction was overturned on appeal.

B'nai Brith Canada's executive vice-president, Frank Dimant, said that this "was a clear case of spewing anti-Jewish hatred, even though the court found that it did not meet the legal standard for a conviction." The group urged Ottawa to review hate crimes legislation, saying the Ahenakew affair has created "uncertainty and doubt."

Canadian Jewish Congress said it accepted the decision, adding that, ironically, the case actually brought the Jews and First Nations "closer than we have ever been."

Jews' Plight Raised

NEW YORK—Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev said former U.S. president Ronald Reagan raised the plight of Soviet Jewry every time the two met. The disclosure came March 26 at an American Jewish Historical Society event in New York City, organizers said.

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Ignatieff calls for increased sanctions on Iran

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — The Iranian government must understand that the international community's support for Israel's existence is "backed up by credible deterrents," Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff says.

In a March 20 interview, The CJN referred Ignatieff to a statement by Israel's incoming prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the March 9 edition of Newsweek. Asked whether, short of military action, he thinks it's possible to halt Iran's nuclear program, Netanyahu answered, "I think this regime is vulnerable to pressure that ought to be intensified. But none of these sanctions and other measures that are contemplated would have much of an effect if the Iranians believe that a military option is off the table."

In response, Ignatieff said, "Iran has to understand that the international community is united on the proposition that you can't deny the Holocaust, and you can't threaten any of your neighbours, and certainly not the Jewish state. And that means the Iranian government has to be aware that those feelings, those views, are backed up with appropriate military force… so they are backed up by credible deterrents.

'Iran has to understand that the international community is united on the proposition that you can't deny the Holocaust, and you can't threaten any of your neighbours, and certainly not the Jewish state'

"But I think it's legitimate… to say no thoughtful Israeli and no thoughtful Iranian, in my view, wants this to come to conflict, and it would be a catastrophe for both sides.

"Canada has always stood for peace. So … Canada has to stand essentially for three things: unequivocal condemnation of Holocaust-denying rhetoric [and] anti-Israeli rhetoric by the Iranian regime; commitment to credible military deterrence; commitment to demanding that Iran comply with the International Atomic Energy Association in respect of its domestic nuclear program. And as Canada has always said, there are no military solutions in this region.

"'At the end of the day, Iran is a great power. Israel is a legitimate democratic state. There are no ultimate military solutions to these problems. There has to be some kind of opening of the doors, in which Israel and Iran eventually sit down and live in peace with each other.

"The alternatives are generally too horrible to contemplate. That doesn't mean backing down from being totally clear to the Iranians, but I don't want to encourage any sabre-rattling rhetoric, especially not at a moment when the president of the United States is beginning to open the door to discussion.

Continued on page 22

Michael Ignatieff

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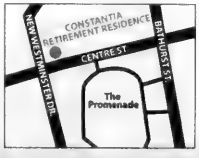

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South Africa's lost moral centre

From the editor's desk...

Among Israel's accusers, the most absurd, and in a sense, perhaps the most cutting, is the government of South Africa and its allied organizations.

Staunchly aligned with the Third (or developing) World, South Africa sides reflexively and unquestioningly with Israel's enemies in the Jewish state's struggle to live its own free and secure existence within the family of nations. The fact that Pretoria so enthusiastically endorses the Israel-apartheid calumny is utterly absurd given the facts of the Israeli-Palestinian (Arab) conflict, the truth of the conflict's history and the nature of Israeli society, especially in comparison to the societies of the surrounding Arab world.

But there is no denying either that South Africa's enveloping disdain of Israel is painful to the Jewish state.

In some international circles and multilateral arenas, South Africa still refracts a shining of moral light as a result of its victory over apartheid. Thus, because of this horrible crucible of its past, it enjoys a kind of venerated status in the Third World.

Unfortunately, very little light now is refracted by or bends toward a moral centre in South Africa.

Government officials are not reluctant to utter anti-Jewish rubbish.

As reported by JTA, South Africa's deputy foreign minister, Fatima Hajaig, told a pro-Palestinian rally in January that Jews controlled America, "no matter which government comes into power, whether Republican or Democratic, whether Barack Obama or George Bush.

"The control of America, just like the control of most western countries, is in the hands of Jewish money," she said.

President Kgalema Motlanthe subsequently met with Jewish community leaders but did not disavow his colleague's remarks. He did, however, try to assure community leaders that "everything would be done to ensure the community's safety."

South African government spokespeople, it seems, are in lock step with the labour leaders of the country.

In February, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) announced its "determination to refuse to offload ships from Israel" and "to strengthen the campaign in boycotts, divestment and sanctions against apartheid Israel." They chose as their test case an Israeli cargo ship docked in Durban.

In its press release, the union called on the South African government "to sever diplomatic and trade relations with Israel."

"COSATU, the Palestine Solidarity Committee, the Young Communist League and a range of other organizations... also take this opportunity to salute the millions of workers all over the world who have openly condemned and taken decisive steps to isolate apartheid Israel... We call on other workers and unions to follow suit and to do all that is necessary to ensure that they boycott all goods to and from Israel until Palestine is free."

"FREE PALESTINE! ISOLATE APARTHEID ISRAEL!," the press release shrieked in an all-caps headline.

In a further twist of the absurdity and moral inversion, COSATU, the self-appointed champion for all of the unfree of the world seems quite indifferent, if not downright hostile, to the idea that the people of Tibet deserve freedom as well.

Last week, the government of South Africa banned the Dalai Lama from travelling to South Africa.

Is there a more universally recognized symbol of peace and tolerance than the Dalai Lama? Is Tibetan independence less worthy a cause than, say, Palestinian independence?

It must be. For the trade unions of South Africa say it is

Otherwise, how can we explain the following statement carried by the COSATU Daily News and endorsed by the congress on the day following Pretoria's decision to ban the Dalai Lama from attending a peace conference in Johannesburg?

"The SACP [South African Communist Party] fully appreciates and accepts the decision by the South African government not to grant a visa for the Dali Lama visit at this time. We stand by our government on this matter.

"It is a well known fact that the month of March is a particularly sensitive period as it is associated with the Dalai Lama's putsch for cession of Tibet from China.

"We congratulate our government's vigilance and asserting the full responsibility to articulate an independent and sovereign position on foreign policy matters..."

Dalai Lama at the Kotel in 1999 ***[Israel photo]***

Not all South Africans were pleased with their government's decision to ban the Dalai Lama. Bishop Desmond Tutu, for example, said he was "distressed and ashamed."

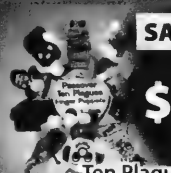
But whom Pretoria would ban, Jerusalem receives openly and with great humility. Twice in the last decade, the Dalai Lama has visited Israel. The photo inset shows him at the Western Wall in 1999.

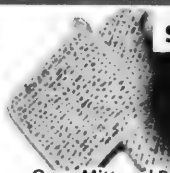
The hypocrisy of Israel's South African accusers is comedic. But the silence of Israel's accusers on the left is unconscionable. They wax indignant over Israel's alleged sins, but lose their voice entirely over the transgressions of political and ideological comrades such as the government in Pretoria.

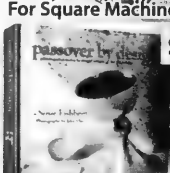
–MBD

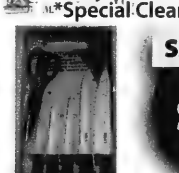
CANADIANS HELP REPAIR ANCIENT SYNAGOGUE

Emma Galet, a young Canadian, celebrated her bat mitzvah recently at the newly renovated ancient synagogue at Maon, 20 kilometres southwest of Gaza. Emma attended the renovation ceremony with children from the kibbutzim and moshavim bordering the Gaza Strip, who were also celebrating their bar and bat mitzvahs. The Galet family helped make the renovations and repairs possible. The area has been badly damaged by the constant barrage of rockets from Gaza. Pictured are Efi Stenzler, left, world chairman of the Jewish National Fund, Sandy Galet and Emma sharing the happy moment. [Israel photo]









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Medical journal takes flak over Gaza articles

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The editor of the Canadian Medical Association Journal is denying an accusation that he permitted "crude anti-Israel propaganda" to seep into two articles on the state of health care in the Gaza Strip before and after Israel's recent invasion.

The claim was levelled by Honest Reporting Canada after the CMAJ, with a circulation of 70,000, carried two pieces in its March 17 edition on Gaza's health care system.

According to the Israel advocacy organization, the articles were "over-simplified, misleading [and] incomplete," and solely blamed Israel for the abysmal medical situation in Gaza.

Rebutting the accusations in an interview, Dr. Paul Hebert, the journal's editor for the past two years, denied that the articles were anti-Israel and described them as "simple descriptions of events."

He added, "We stay away from the root causes of conflicts."

In a subsequent exchange with Honest Reporting Canada, Hebert said: "We published the articles to provide a perspective on the health-related and health infrastructure consequences of war, which is within our purview as a medical journal."

Hebert, a critical care physician at the Ottawa Hospital, said the CMAJ wasn't taking sides when it published the articles by Christopher Mason and Francois Dumont.

Mason's piece, headlined "Gaza's health care system crippled before – and after," said it was already in poor condition due to underfunding and Israel's blockade.

Dumont's article, "On the ground in the Gaza Strip," profiled two Palestinian doctors working for Doctors without Borders in Gaza.

In response, the CMAJ received more than 200 letters of complaint from irate readers, but only several letters of support, Hebert reported.

The articles were carefully edited and meant to be fair and balanced, he said. "We didn't take sides. We don't assign blame. I'm sorry if they were misinterpreted. It's unfortunate."

Due to the controversy, Hebert has invited readers to send submissions and letters.

Letters will be posted on the CMAJ's website and submissions will be carefully considered. "I will publish them if they meet our editorial standards."

Hebert said his journal wants to remain "objective, open and accessible."

Dr. Paul Hebert

In a scathing critique of the articles, Honest Reporting Canada listed a succession of "deficiencies":

• The reports failed to mention Israel's adversary, Hamas, which refuses to recognize its existence.

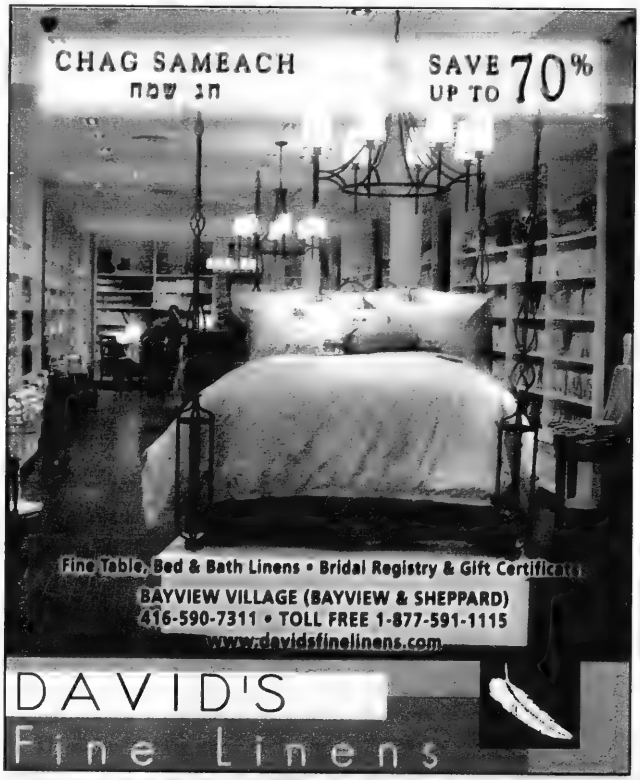
• The reports did not mention the reason for Israel's invasion: to thwart Hamas rocket attacks on Israeli communities near the border.

• The reports did not mention Hamas' and the Palestinian Authority's responsibility for ensuring the health and welfare of its citizens.

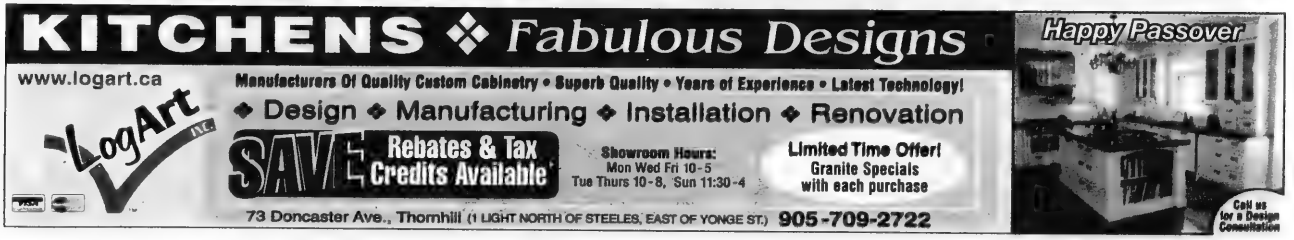
Honest Reporting Canada goes on to say that Hamas stole humanitarian aid destined for ordinary Palestinians, prevented wounded Palestinian civilians from seeking medical treatment and used ambulances for transportation and hospitals as jails.

Honest Reporting Canada also pointed out that the articles omitted such information as Israel's efforts to treat wounded Palestinians and facilitate aid to Gaza.

Hebert said the CMAJ has published articles on areas of conflict – such as Darfur and Afghanistan – in the past, but had never received so vociferous a reaction.



FOOD DRIVE HELPERS: The L'Chaim Cancer Support Group spent an evening helping to pack parcels for the National Council of Jewish Women's Passover Food Drive. Pictured standing, from left, are Susan Shoychet, Clara Shore, Marsha Urowitz, Elizabeth Erlich, Marsha Klerer, Michelle Szames, Marsha Klein, Risa Mintz, Ghita Stern, Susan Hennick. Kneeling is Wilfred Ross.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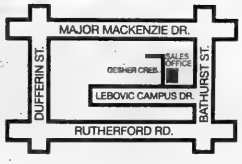

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Obscene

On its website, Universal Press Syndicate, the distributor of the award-winning work of political cartoonist Pat Oliphant, says "no one is safe from the acid brush of Pat Oliphant." But the brush with which Oliphant painted the cartoon about Israel that appeared last Wednesday was dipped not in acid but rather in vile toxic poison.

We struggled with the question of whether or not to make the Oliphant cartoon the subject of this editorial. For to write about it necessarily requires republishing it. And republishing it necessarily entails repeating the offence. But in our view, the underlying issue in the cartoon's publication is sufficiently important to warrant reprinting it and risking causing offence to the sensibilities of our readers.

The cartoon is ghoulish and grisly. It features a spectral, headless figure, a sword outstretched in its right hand, goose-stepping toward a trembling, miniature woman called Gaza, who is carrying an infant. In the ghoul's other hand is a large, fanged, menacing Star of David about to devour helpless Gaza.

The syndicated cartoon has doubtlessly reached millions of readers in newspapers and on websites around the world.

Jewish leaders and groups have denounced the cartoon. Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, described it as "hideously anti-Semitic."

The Simon Wiesenthal Center correctly noted that "the imagery in this cartoon mimics the venomous anti-Semitic propaganda of the Nazi and Soviet eras. It is cartoons like this that inspired millions of people to hate in the 1930s and help set the stage for the Nazi genocide."

In Jerusalem, Efraim Zuroff, director of the Wiesenthal Center's Israel office protested that "this is absolutely disgusting. God Almighty! This is a classic example of criticism of Israel carried out in a pernicious, anti-Semitic fashion."

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism suggested that "Oliphant has the right to his views, however noxious," but urged media outlets not "to become publishers of such trash."

Oliphant is one of the most widely syndicated political cartoonists in the world. He has won a Pulitzer Prize for his work. But this cartoon is loathsome.

It is odious in its own right as so many have pointed out. But it is as worrisome as it is odious. For it suggests that even celebrated, mainstream commentators have been persuaded by the extreme, mendacious, anti-Israel rhetoric, and that no commentary is too vile to be uttered, and no image is too obscene to be distributed. When the line of fair political comment shifts to one of acid brush strokes monstrously demonizing the Jewish state and distorting its efforts to live free from terror, we must protest. We must register our disgust. To borrow from the poet Dylan Thomas, we must rage, rage against denying what is right.

25 years ago in The CJN

Tributes poured in from across Canada for Bora Laskin, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, who died after a long illness. He was accorded a state funeral, which was attended by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, former governor general Roland Michener, politicians, fellow judges, community leaders and the general public.

Dry Bones
WB. SHLLDIG AND DOOBIE
THE NEW ISRAELI GOV'T HAS A RIGHT WING, A LEFT WING, A RELIGIOUS WING, AND AN ANTI-RELIGIOUS WING.
WOW!
SO WHO IS IN THE OPPOSITION?
KADIMA
THE PARTY OF . . .
. . . THE "RADICAL MIDDLE".
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Free speech is a precious commodity

British Member of Parliament George Galloway was recently barred from entering Canada, ostensibly because he is a supporter of terrorists. It is more likely that his tirades against Israel, opposition to NATO in Afghanistan and even words of support for Saddam Hussein have cultivated strong enemies. In other words, his speech has been offensive. The immediate decision was supposedly taken by border officials but their superior, Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney declined to reverse the ruling.

I cannot say whether Kenney initiated the decision or whether, more likely, he was urged to take such action by Canadian Jewish Congress and B'nai Brith. We do know that both groups were, unfortunately, in that minority which applauded the government's position.

Meanwhile, Galloway and his supporters have gained immensely more from his banning than they would have if he had quietly been allowed to speak. Their meetings will now be jammed full with those who will see the British MP on closed circuit television, and the newspapers will also pay closer attention. Our Jewish organizations mistakenly supported a Conservative government that is all too ready to suppress free speech in the name of fighting terrorism.

Free speech is too precious a commodity to be squandered on counterproductive attempts to stifle the likes of George Galloway. The Jewish community of Canada must be counted among the defenders of free speech, not its enemies. We will alienate many of our fellow Canadians if we are perceived as opposed to such an important value. Our own history shows us that we have too much to lose when fundamental liberties are sacrificed in the name of expediency.

Stephen Scheinberg
Montreal

Editor's note: A judge was to decide on Monday afternoon, after The CJN's deadline, whether to overturn the decision that bars George Galloway from entering Canada.

* * *

Jewish critics of Israel

I must take issue with columnist Gerald Steinberg's claim that the "independent Jewish voices" who choose to criticize Israel's policies are "not active in synagogues, play no role in other Jewish institutions and do not contribute to Jewish life" ("Israel-bashing Jews: not in my name," CJN, March 5). In 2004, my colleague Emma Jo Aiken and myself conducted a research project with members of Toronto Jewish groups opposed to Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian lands. The results were presented that year at the annual meeting of the Association of Canadian Jewish Studies. Contrary to Steinberg's claim, the 15 interviewees, representing five different groups, displayed a strong commitment to Jewish life. In fact, more than half of those interviewed belonged to synagogues and had a self-described "strong Jewish background," including attendance at Jewish day schools and membership in Zionist youth movements. Indeed, half of those interviewed described themselves as Zionists with strong connections to the traditions of socialist thought and dissent that are part of the history of Zionism. While it may be comfortable to believe that Jews who criticize Israel are beyond the pale, there is evidence that their connection to Judaism and Jewish life is not only quite real, but for many is the basis for their political stance.

Sheryl Nestel
Toronto

CATERING, ENTERTAINMENT, PRINTED INVITATIONS...ISN'T THIS ALL A WASTE FOR A ONE YEAR OLD'S BIRTHDAY PARTY?
CONSIDER IT AS TRAINING FOR HIS BARMITZVAH
KIRSCHEN

* * *

The Latimer case

In the article "Emil Sher's play raises ethical issues," it states that "[Robert] Latimer was convinced he did the right thing, since 12-year-old Tracy was suffering from cerebral palsy, weighed 38 pounds and was about to undergo another surgery to relieve pain" (CJN, March 26).

It should be noted that, in his written decision, the trial judge wrote that "on the basis of the evidence presented at this trial, there is no suggestion, by any witness who testified or for that matter by Crown counsel, that he was in any way motivated by her disability. All the evidence points to his concern for the pain which he saw flowing from her illness. So on the evidence I heard, I could not conclude Mr. Latimer ever considered killing his daughter because she was disabled." The Supreme Court of Canada concurred with this finding.

Also, the proposed surgery, with which it was hoped that some of Tracy's pain might be relieved, would have involved the removal of her upper thigh bone, leaving her lower leg hanging loose without any connecting bone. The orthopedic surgeon described the post-operative pain from this type of surgery as "incredible."

Stewart Webb
Qualicum Beach, B.C.

* * *

Correction: Due to an editing error, there was incorrect information in the letter "York can learn a lesson from Concordia" (CJN, March 19). Benjamin Netanyahu was not part of the Israeli government in September 2002.

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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A call to the community and York U's administration

As York University faculty members, some of whom have spent most of their careers building one of Canada's largest and best programs in Jewish studies, others of whom have been attracted to York because of that program, the events of recent weeks have been very painful. York has become the symbol of the escalating anti-Israel activity that's rife on campuses across North America and elsewhere.

This is especially dismaying, because, like others at York, we believed we were engaged in building a university that would welcome students and faculty of diverse views and backgrounds, people who had traditionally been made to feel less than comfortable in more established Canadian universities. And, indeed, a very large number of our students over the years have been the first in their families to attend university.

Michael Brown

The early emergence of Jewish studies as an integral and legitimate part of the curriculum was itself a sign of York's difference. Traditionally in Canada and elsewhere, Jewish civilization was not considered worthy of academic interest, except insofar as it served as a precursor to Christianity. That York was in the forefront in Canada of openness to studying cultures other than that of Christian Europe on their own terms and not only in relation to the dominant culture said a lot about the university. When a Jewish history course was first proposed, one member of the history department opposed it on the grounds that there was no such thing as Jewish history. He was outvoted, however, and today hundreds of York students, some of them Jewish, many of them not, regularly enrol in Jewish studies courses.

Carl S. Ehrlich

In recent weeks, however, openness and civility seem to have collapsed. For some students and faculty, the collaborative search for knowledge has been replaced by attempts to shut out or shout down anyone who supports Israel. Outsiders, most of whom have not bothered to consult with faculty, have endeavoured to inflate the unpleasantness at the university. But there is no gainsaying the deteriorating atmosphere.

Sara Horowitz

Because of the publicity given to the disturbances, those who don't visit the campus regularly may be surprised to learn that it's still possible to walk the halls wearing a kippah (or a hijab) without raising an eyebrow, to have lunch peacefully in the kosher restaurant (one of only a very few on North-American campuses) and to attend Jewish studies classes in which Jewish and non-Jewish students are respectful to each other and to the material.

But there is certainly now another face to York, as there is to many – and perhaps even most – campuses in Canada, the United States and Europe. Students – and occasionally faculty – clash stridently over Israel and Jewish issues. Israel is vilified and singled out for actions that go unremarked when taken by other countries. Jewish students – some "Zionists," some not – are subjected to verbal abuse from other students and occasionally from members of the teaching staff. Students and faculty members may feel intimidated about voicing their Jewish commitments, especially support for Israel. Those who have a stake in seeing the pot boil over stoke the fires to the applause of extreme partisans on both sides.

Universities are and should be safe havens for a very wide diversity of ideas and commitments, within the parameters of the law and within the parameters of civilized discourse. Freedom to think and speak your mind is fundamental to our society, and certainly to universities. But that freedom must involve a willingness to hear the "other side." Many on our campus today, however, and on other campuses, and in the community subscribe to that notion only for themselves and those who agree with them.

Eric Lawee

What is most disappointing about the decay of civility and tolerance at York is the response to behaviour that should be out of bounds. On March 20, President Mamdouh Shoukri issued a statement, which we endorse enthusiastically, that condemned the disturbances, and the university has issued other statements during the past weeks. Fines and suspensions have been levied for minor infractions of rules, as they should be. No university can allow classes to be disrupted by demonstrations that use sound-amplifying equipment.

Martin Lockshin

Significantly, however, little or nothing has come of investigations into serious complaints of harassment, intimidation and rowdyism. The fines and suspensions are levied in an "even-handed" manner on the rowdies and their targets alike (should the latter speak out in their own defence), and official statements go out of their way to be "even-handed" rather than pinpoint the offences and the offending groups. Nor do the sanctions that are levied appear to be enforced consistently.

The net effect is the encouragement of thuggery and the increasing impression at York and among the larger public that our university is a battleground that's hostile to Jews.

Overshadowed and forgotten are the many ways in which York continues to be especially hospitable to students of all backgrounds, including Jews. York has the largest Jewish student contingent of any Canadian university and a vibrant Hillel chapter. There is a kosher restaurant on campus that's patronized by Jewish and Muslim students concerned about dietary restrictions, as well as others. Shalom/Salam, an organization promoting peace and dialogue among pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian students, was founded by Jewish and Muslim York students.

A key to combating anti-Semitism in all of its guises is teaching and learning about all aspects of Judaism, something that takes place as a matter of course, without special pleading, in our comprehensive Jewish studies classes. And Jewish studies is flourishing at York with students and faculty from many backgrounds.

Our Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies includes more than 40 faculty members with a variety of research interests. We offer several courses in which the language of instruction is Hebrew, a rarity in North American universities. Faculty publish in Hebrew and participate in conferences in Israel and in exchanges with Israeli universities. York students study in Israel, taking advantage of York scholarship funds. A new visiting position in Israel studies has been inaugurated this year. York has one of the only programs for Jewish teacher education at a North American university. York's Appel Program for Holocaust and Anti-Racism Education for future teachers in Canada, Germany and Poland is unique. York has awarded honorary degrees to former Israeli cabinet minister Natan Sharansky, the late Israeli president Haim Herzog and former Israeli chief justice Aharon Barak.

Ahouva Shulman

Mark Webber

Kalman Weiser

This is an extraordinary record, and these things have come about because faculty and administrators have put them into place with the support of the university at large. We have benefitted enormously over the years from the encouragement and financial support of individuals and the community, but the initiatives for York's remarkable accomplishments in Jewish studies and Jewish life have come from within the university.

None of this should be understood as minimizing the reality of the present unpleasantness or the feeling of being intimidated and menaced that many students and even faculty are expressing. It should not be read as an excuse for the absence of firm and frank support in word and deed on the part of the university for civility and tolerance towards all groups (not excluding Jews), and support for the right to hold and voice diverse commitments (not excluding commitment to the well-being of Israel).

Such support should be explicitly stated and acted upon.

The problem is not confined to York, as we have said. To date, however, statements and actions of academic leaders at other universities around North America have been strong and forthright. And while we have confidence in the goodwill of our administration, we need to hear more at York regarding the specific issues confronting our campus now. We are encouraged by the appointment of a task force to consider ways to make York once again the civilized and tolerant place it has always been. But we cannot wait until August for forthright and resolute words and deeds.

To be sure, even strong pronouncements will not dispel the veiled anti-Semitism, often masquerading as opposition to Israeli policies. This will not quickly disappear from York, from other North American campuses or from other sectors of our society. We don't wish to silence those who disagree with us. But we do insist on maintaining a civil atmosphere at York in which the goal is the pursuit of knowledge, not the silencing of disagreement.

To faculty, students and the larger community, we say, "Despite current events at York, be mindful of the considerable – and to some extent unique – ways in which Jewish life and learning continue to flourish at our university!"

To the community, we say, "Thank you for your concern and interest, but please do not assume that that those outside York understand the situation better than those of us at the university! Before acting, consult with those on campus!"

To the York administration, we say, "Continue to speak loudly and clearly in defence of civility and tolerance, loudly and clearly against all manifestations of prejudice including anti-Semitism! But do not shy away from addressing the specific problems that have arisen at York! And act!"

Michael Brown, former director, Centre for Jewish Studies

Carl S. Ehrlich, executive committee, Centre for Jewish Studies

Sara Horowitz, director, Centre for Jewish Studies

Eric Lawee, director, program in Jewish studies

Martin Lockshin, former director, Centre for Jewish Studies

Ahouva Shulman, co-ordinator, Hebrew language program;

Mark Webber, executive committee, Centre for Jewish Studies

Kalman Weiser, Silber Chair in modern Jewish studies.

Opinions

Promoting inclusivity at McMaster

While the odious term "Israeli apartheid" has come to define the weeklong anti-Israel hate-fest at an increasing number of universities, it should not be assumed that campus anti-Semitism goes on hiatus during much of the remainder of the school year. Far from it. And although events at York University stand out as the most obvious and more ominous of recent assaults on our students, there are many more recorded examples of intimidation and harassment of Jewish minorities on campuses across Canada.

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

And despite codes of conduct that are supposed to protect students from threatening behaviour and ensure inclusivity for all who attend our institutions of higher learning, there is nonetheless a pervasive reluctance for university administrators to either enforce such codes or come up with other strategies to promote a less-hostile campus environment.

This is why what has become known as the "McMaster Peace Initiative" is that much more remarkable. Under the guidance of the university's director of human rights and equity services, Milé Komlein, and with the full endorsement of the offices of the president and provost, a framework has emerged that is intended to "advance diverse viewpoints in the spirit of inclusiveness and academic integrity." It commits signatories to its guiding principles to "move beyond the language of demonization and delegitimization" and "create an environment for mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence".

Whether such lofty goals will be realized remains to be seen. Much will depend on the administration's ability to deal swiftly and resolutely with violations to the fundamental precepts of the document which, incidentally, have already occurred. Nonetheless, there is an emerging hope among Jewish students and faculty at McMaster that this is at least an important first step toward creating a more harmonious atmosphere on our campus.

* * *

It is with some irony that Roy Green references a program of "interfaith dialogue" between Judea Pearl and Akbar Ahmed as one of the supposed successes of the now defunct "Hamilton Jewish Arab Muslim Dialogue" (CJN Letter, March 19). What he omits to mention is that just before that event (in 2006), there had already been several breaches of the guidelines that the dialogue partners had agreed to. But instead of removing themselves from the process right then and there, as they should have done, the Jewish representatives on the dialogue committee chose to recommit to what was essentially an exercise in hypocrisy and appeasement.

Contrary to Green's opinion, the "dialogue" never really had any outreach to "the greater Hamilton community". Rather, it was seen to be no more than a gimmick to advance the self-interest of its principal participants.

Making Israel a sports pariah is out of bounds

Israel is viewed as a military superpower, certainly regionally. That cannot be said for our sports prowess. Israel has won only seven Olympic medals, all since the Barcelona Games in 1992. We're not too bad in several sports, particularly windsurfing and judo. Each have brought Israel three medals, including our only gold, won by windsurfer Gal Fridman in Athens in 2004. We're also developing a world-class rhythmic gymnastics program.

Yair Lootsteen in Jerusalem

In team sports, basketball is our regional forte, with Maccabi Tel Aviv reaching the final stages of almost every year's Euroleague Championships, this year being a disappointing exception. Soccer is Israel's most popular sport, and there's an outside chance the national team might actually advance to the 2010 World Cup.

Israel also has a handful of excellent tennis pros. Shachar Pe'er is ranked 46th in the world, down from a career high 15th in 2007. Dudi Sela is slowly ascending the men's rankings, currently sitting 57th, and Andy Ram and Yoni Erlich are among the world's best doubles couplings, having won the Australian Open in 2008.

On March 8, Israel's men's tennis team advanced to the quarter-finals of the 2009 Davis Cup, after beating Sweden, in Malmo, 3-2. It was exhilarating. Going into the last day, we were behind 2-1. Sela won the day's first match in five sets and the decisive fifth match also went to five sets. Harel Levy, ranked 212th in the world, won the last set 8-6. The victory places Israel among the world's eight premier tennis teams. We'll meet Russia in the quarter-finals, in Ramat Hasharon, in July.

The tension in Malmo wasn't limited to the tennis arena. During the tournament, an Arab mob descended on the city, demonstrating violently against Israel and its tennis team's participation in the Davis Cup, in the wake of Israel's Gaza operation. Because of the threat of such protests, and despite their own team's objections, Swedish authorities decided the matches would be played without spectators. On the sporting level, that was probably in Israel's favour, because it deprived the Swedes of home-team advantage, but in a broader sense, it was troubling.

There have been several similar incidents in the last couple of months. In February, Pe'er was denied a visa into the United Arab Emirates and participation in the Dubai Tennis Championships. As a result, one sponsor pulled out of the tournament, and the Tennis Channel decided not to give it any air time, but the competition went on anyway.

Even more disturbing, in January, a Turkish mob in Ankara forced the Bnei Hasharon basketball team to flee to its locker room after coins and bottles, as well as chants of "Allah Akbar" and "Death to the Jews," were hurled at them. All this came before the game against a local team even began. Astoundingly, after two hours, the referee demanded that the Israeli team return to the court to play, asserting that order had been restored. When it refused, the Turkish team was awarded a victory.

Sports stadiums are not the only arenas where Israel and Israelis are being attacked. Academics, trade unions and so-called intellectuals around the western world are seeking to end co-operation with Israel's academic and research institutions, to boycott Israeli companies and goods, and to divest from firms that do business with Israel. CUPE Ontario is an ignoble example.

Criticism of Israel and its policies is legitimate. Branding it an apartheid state and calling for boycotting all things Israeli are not. There's no denying we're the only democracy in a region that would happily be rid of us (as would many "enlightened" westerners). Our elected government is tasked with ensuring that this doesn't happen and that Israelis can live securely. Critics say it carries out that duty too heavy-handedly, and while a vociferous debate within Israel encompasses all aspects of the issue, the government's actions don't justify turning Israel and Israelis into pariahs.

Successful Israelis – whether in academia, commerce, the arts or sports – are mud in the eyes of our enemies and detractors. But that's the beauty of this country. Despite adversity, so many good things have flourished.

Come see our boys take on the Russians in Ramat Hasharon.

Human rights groups should advocate for Schalit

Unless there is a last-minute breakthrough, Israelis will be pouring a fifth cup at the Passover seder for Gilad Schalit, the young soldier kidnapped by Hamas in June 2006. Schalit, like the Soviet Jews who were held in the Gulag before the collapse of the Soviet Union, represents the antithesis of the freedom celebrated at the seder and reminds the rest of us of the obligation to fight for those whose freedom is denied.

Gerald Steinberg in Jerusalem

As the outsized calendar next to the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem marking the days of Schalit's captivity reached 1,000, Israelis debated the price of his release. Everyone identified with him and his family, and they agonized over the difficult decisions.

Israelis focusing on the plight of the individual urged the government to accept the demands by Hamas to release hundreds of terrorists. They argued that the country has a moral obligation to bring back the soldiers that were sent to protect the country, regardless of the risk. And by the same token, soldiers and their families needed to know that the country would do what was necessary if they were captured.

But others – including families of terror victims – warned that by releasing Palestinians responsible for the Park Hotel attack on seder night in Netanya in 2002, as well as Sbarro's pizzeria in 2001 in Jerusalem, and numerous bus bombings, Israel would be inviting more terror. The perpetrators of the next wave would know that after they were caught, there would be more kidnappings to free them. Previous experience shows that many of the released terrorists return to commit or prepare more attacks (the same is true for Al Qaeda captives freed from the U.S. prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba).

Ehud Olmert, who was prime minister at the time of Schalit's capture, was widely expected to accept the costs and agree to the release of the terrorists demanded by Hamas in his last days in office. Negotiators went to Cairo for talks, but – to the surprise of many – Olmert told the nation that the price was too high, and the future dangers too great.

This stance may also have caught Hamas leaders off guard. They apparently counted on a continuing Israeli policy of disproportionate exchanges for prisoners of war, and, most recently, in the case of the bodies of soldiers killed and kidnapped by Hezbollah. As a result, they continue to hold Schalit after more than 1,000 days.

At the same time, and in contrast to the public demonstrations inside Israel, there was a growing recognition of the ringing silence regarding Schalit on the part of the human rights network. In the face of this gross violation of the most basic rights, as well as the Geneva conventions, the organizations that claim to promote international morality, including officials of the United Nations Human Rights Council, have failed to do anything on Schalit's behalf.

Similarly, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch – which have active branches and major donors in Toronto – have remained silent on this central Palestinian violation of international law. This contrasts with the flood of anti-Israel condemnations and campaigns, particularly regarding Gaza. And the same is true for Israeli organizations, such as B'tselem, that claim a human rights mandate, as well as the numerous political groups funded by the New Israel Fund.

It was only after this damning silence became a public issue and source of embarrassment that minimal efforts began to be made. Instead of a long-overdue action alert, Amnesty issued a laconic and immorally "balanced" statement, putting the kidnappers and the victim in the same basket, in a news story headlined: "Detainees used as bargaining chips by both sides in Israel/Gaza conflict." And Human Rights Watch continued to ignore the issue.

To free Schalit and to deter further kidnappings by Hezbollah, Hamas or other terror groups, the international guardians of human rights must re-examine their behaviour and biases. Those who claim to act in the name of morality have the obligation to lead this fight, including for Israelis unable to celebrate freedom again this year.

The Kirshner File

The Nixon-Kissinger partnership

For 5-1/2 years, from 1968 to 1974, Richard Nixon – the president of the United States – and Henry Kissinger – his national security adviser and then secretary of state – were bound together in a partnership that shaped world politics.

They threw themselves into a thicket of pressing problems, from ending the war in Vietnam and opening up a new chapter in Sino-American relations to building detente with the Soviet Union and managing the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Tilting toward Pakistan in its war with India and plotting to overthrow the democratically elected, left-leaning government of Salvadore Allende in Chile, they hurtled from one crisis to the next.

Ultimately, their professional relationship was cut short by the slow-simmering, explosive Watergate scandal, which doomed Nixon's presidency.

All this is the subject of Robert Dallek's magisterial book, Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power (HarperCollins), which will likely stand as one of the most important texts on U.S. foreign policy and a nuanced portrait of an American president and his close associate.

Their partnership, Dallek suggests, was an unlikely one. Nixon, a Quaker from a sleepy town north of Los Angeles, was an insular and socially insecure individual who could casually toss off anti-Semitic remarks. Kissinger, a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany and a Harvard-trained intellectual and academic who modelled himself after the 19th-century Austrian statesman Metternich, was animated by an overarching ambition to be a high government official. Outsiders from radically different backgrounds, they dreamed of recasting international affairs.

Yet, as Dallek notes, they were also combative rivals. Kissinger, who consulted with Nixon more often than anyone in the White House, considered his boss very odd and unpleasant and his aides "a gang of self-seeking bastards" and "heels." In private, he referred to Nixon as "that madman" and "our drunken friend." Nixon, for his part, did not appreciate Kissinger's eagerness for the limelight and his self-serving ambitions. Behind Kissinger's back and occasionally to his face, he snidely called him a "Jew boy" and "Sir Henry." But since foreign policy was Nixon's primary interest, no aide was more important than Kissinger. Consequently, Kissinger had the run of the Oval Office and supplemented his daily visits with frequent telephone calls.

The major challenges the pair faced during Nixon's first term ran the gamut from Vietnam and relations with the Soviet Union to the Middle East and China. They believed that if they were to leave an imprint on history, they would either have to resolve these issues or render them less threatening to U.S. national interests. Vietnam and the Soviet Union were their priorities, but China would be their diplomatic triumph.

As for the Middle East, Kissinger was pessimistic that the United States could significantly alter the course of events there, while Nixon was reluctant to become involved in a conflict that seemed intractable. Nevertheless, the Mideast would figure highly in their calculations.

Nixon began his presidency by making his first secretary of state, William Rogers, responsible for mideastern affairs. Nixon believed that Kissinger, who had lost 13 relatives in the Holocaust, could not be sufficiently objective about Israel. But since the Mideast was in a state of perpetual crisis, Kissinger wielded more influence on developments there than Nixon had intended.

Nixon's approach to the Mideast was clinical and dispassionate. As he told France's president, Charles de Gaulle, he would not be influenced by the Jewish vote and wanted to make decisions based on strict considerations of national security.

Although several of his most important assistants were Jewish, including William Safire and Leonard Garment, Nixon resented American Jews because they tended to be Democrats rather than Republicans and dismissed him as unworthy of high political office.

Claiming that Nixon was "a cultural anti-Semite," Dallek writes that he shared many of the prejudices of lower middle-class Americans. As Kissinger himself observed, "He believed that Jews formed a powerful cohesive group in American society; that they were predominately liberal; that they put the interests of Israel above everything else; that on the whole they were more sympathetic to the Soviet Union than any other ethnic groups; [and] that their control of the media made them dangerous adversaries." According to Dallek, Kissinger basically tolerated his anti-Semitic views and outbursts.

Like Rogers, Nixon held that the Arab-Israeli dispute could be settled only through an imposed settlement. They were concerned that it threatened Jordan and Lebanon, enhanced Soviet influence in the region and increased tensions with Moscow.

Richard Nixon confers with Henry Kissinger in a 1972 White House meeting

But in the end, the Nixon administration did not try to exert pressure on Israel. Nixon's aide, H.R. Haldeman, reminded him that dealings with Israel had domestic implications. As he put it, "We must not let this issue hurt us politically."

Despite Nixon's jaundiced view of American Jews, he never wavered from his belief that supporting Israel was good for America. By helping Israel, he informed Kissinger, "We are doing what is in our interest because it screws the Russians." As well, Nixon hoped that his pro-Israel position would encourage Jews to back his policies in Southeast Asia.

Dallek says that the burgeoning Watergate affair prompted Nixon to appoint Kissinger as secretary of state in 1973. Kissinger had threatened to resign unless he was chosen for that post.

In the main, Nixon selected Kissinger because he had great respect for Kissinger's abilities, yet he feared that if Kissinger was passed over, Watergate would swamp his presidency. As it turned out, not even Kissinger could save Nixon from the ignominity of a forced resignation.

Within weeks of his appointment, Kissinger – the first Jew to hold that job – was caught up in the Yom Kippur War.

He and Nixon formulated a two-pronged policy: the United States and the Soviet Union, in the interests of avoiding a superpower confrontation, would not be drawn into the fighting. The war should produce a military standoff so that talks between Israel and its Arab enemies could be launched. Nixon, as Dallek observes, hoped that his handling of the war would defuse calls for his impeachment. Since Nixon was distracted by Watergate, Kissinger was effectively in charge of Washington's response to the war, though Nixon tried to convey the impression that he was fully in charge of managing the crisis.

During the postwar period, Kissinger engaged in shuttle diplomacy to hammer out a separation of forces agreement on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts. These achievements lifted his standing to new heights, but Nixon was engulfed by Watergate. Kissinger defended Nixon as a statesman of the first rank, but to no avail. Before stepping down, Nixon convinced his successor, Gerald Ford, to retain Kissinger, describing him as "absolutely indespensable." Ford heeded his advice, and during the Ford presidency, Kissinger was even more in control of foreign policy.

In assessing the Nixon-Kissinger partnership, Dallek praises it as "one of or possibly the most significant White House collaboration in U.S. history."

But he adds that their "misjudgments" on such files as Vietnam, Chile and Pakistan yielded "notable failures." Nixon and Kissinger were clearly talented and experienced, but even they could not always guarantee successful outcomes in foreign policy.

Correction: Egypt's current ambassador to Israel is Yasser Reda, not Assem Ibrahim, as I reported in last week's column.

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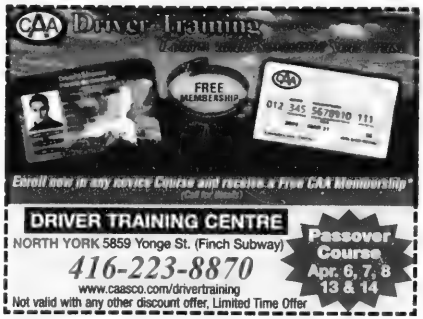
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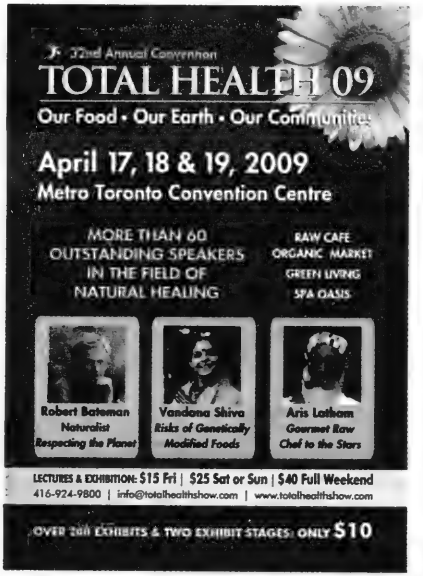
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Jewish Life

The holy garments of our time

By RABBI LEIGH LERNER

Our Torah portion, Tzav, begins with a description of the clothing that Aaron and his sons should wear as they do the work of the high priest. "The priest shall put on his linen garment and his linen breeches." We read this line without considering what was so special about linen. Many aspects of this cloth and its source, the flax plant, merit consideration.

As we approach the holiday of Pesach, we should stop to consider that, believe it or not, these linen garments of Aaron may be a confirmation of our Egyptian experience. We believe that the Israelites left Egypt some 3,300 years ago, in 1,300 BCE. By that time, records indicate, the Egyptians had been manufacturing linen for at least 700 years.

Mummies are wrapped in linen, and another hint that the Israelites were actually in Egypt comes from a biblical description of the 10 plagues. We read in Exodus that the flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley had headed and the flax was in bloom. There is a keen awareness in the Bible of the importance of flax as a plant-source of fibre.

But why do we call it linen, since Hebrew terms exist – *bad*, *shesh*, *butz*, and one other with echoes of Pesach, *karpas*? None of these sound at all like linen. The word is derived from the Latin word for the flax plant, which is *linum*. (By the way, this word gave rise to a number of other terms: line, derived from the use of a linen thread to determine a straight line; lining, due to the fact that linen was often used to create a lining for wool and leather clothing; lingerie, which comes from the French and originally denoted underwear made of linen; linseed oil, an oil derived from flax seed, and linoleum, a floor covering made from linseed oil and other materials.)

Flax and linen were dear to our ancestors, who used it in ritual and traditional storytelling symbols that evoked strong feelings and meanings for ancient Israel. When the Book of Proverbs describes the woman of valour, it says, "She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands."

Have you ever seen what a person's hands must endure when working with flax? After harvesting comes retting, which is today done with chemicals, but until the advent of the industrial age, the woody bark surrounding the flax fibre was decomposed using water. Retting must be done carefully – too little leaves fibres attached to the stalk, while too much rots and weakens the fibre. The stalks are spread on dewy slopes, submerged in stagnant pools of water, or placed in running streams, sometimes for more than a week or two.

After retting, flax plants are squeezed and allowed to dry. Then, they must be broken and the fibres separated from the stalks. This was done by hand with sharp metal combs. It required long, tedious effort with some danger to the worker's hands. My hands would never be eager to undertake this process, which you can see for yourself in the summer at the Ethan Allan Homestead in Burlington, Vt.

Fine linen fibres could be up to half a metre long. But our woman of valour is not done, because she then combs and straightens the fibres and spins them into thread. Making linen takes more effort and greater risk than making cotton thread, and far more effort and risk than making wool. Now we can understand why a fine linen garment would, in its time, be prized as worthy to be the garment of the high priest, and worthy to cover the Holy of Holies. In our industrialized society, we have no equivalent to ancient linen, because we no longer put in the same effort to create fine cloths such as silk or angora.

If we were to clothe the high priest today in fabric that represents our greatest efforts, we would clothe the high priest in the education of our young, in the care of our elderly, in sustaining the disabled, in healing the sick, in fulfilling commandments that bring peace between people, because these are the areas where we need to put in maximum effort with eager hands.

With these efforts, we weave the finest fabric of our society, and they are the holy garments of our time. Only when people clothe society in this kind of fine raiment can we say that we are women and men of valour, creating a *mamlechet kehuna*, a realm of priests and a holy people.

Passover reminds us that as free people, we must choose to do so.

Rabbi Leigh Lerner is spiritual leader of Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom in Montreal.

The Exodus gave us access to transcendence

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

At least once in the national memory of a people, there has to be imprinted not just the historical reality of being liberated, but the constant idea that we are free. What God gave us at the Exodus was the possibility of ever-renewable freedom. Put in the simplest possible terms, in whatever situation one finds oneself in life—financial, professional, existential – one need not be stuck.

JEWISH EDUCATION
The Next Generation

Such is the import of the word "Mitzrayim," which, as many commentaries point out, is related to *metzarim*, meaning a "narrow or constricted place." To live in the Egypt of our daily lives often is to feel fenced in, without any hope for inner release. The Exodus instructs us that all of life is a choice to be free. God's liberation is not merely directed at the Israelites, but at each individual heart at the seder table, for the time comes when one realizes that there's a certain kind of life that is unavoidable if not for the surrender to God and a commitment to the spiritual path.

It's not that another kind of life is a bad life or necessarily an empty one. Such a life may be filled with many things, but inevitably the missing piece is often the sense that something matters beyond what a human being does. From a chillingly material perspective, what humans make, what we believe in, what we value, what we live for, what we die for – that's all there is or seems to be. But the Jewish sequence is quite different, for freedom from Egypt is followed by revelation at Sinai, redeeming Jews from one illusion only: the idea that the standard of human morality is the final ground of existence.

That is the only thing God really freed us from in Mitzrayim. Jews were enslaved after that – they were tortured and gassed and shot and exterminated. They were persecuted and harassed and exiled and ridiculed. But never again were we reduced to a life in which the transcendent was missing, where the spiritual life, the one beyond tangible measure, was not at the centre of our existence. And quite frankly, that has made all the difference in Jewish history. It is to that point that the seder speaks, and that idea represents our salvation.

It would be telling is one were to conduct an on-the-street poll and ask people what they would most desire in life. Answers such as happiness, wealth, romantic love and success would likely pour in. One wonders whether the idea of living for the highest would crack the top 20.

Some of us old enough to remember being enthralled by the signature line of Kris Kristofferson's song Me and Bobby McGee –"Freedom's just another name for nothing left to lose"– must reckon with how this piece of folk wisdom ends up being the antithesis of the Pesach message. For Jews everywhere, freedom must be appreciated as precisely the opportunity to value that which must never be lost.

Jewish Life

Jewish outlaws of the high seas

Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean: How a generation of swashbuckling Jews carved out an empire in the New World in their quest for treasure, religious freedom – and revenge, by Edward Kritzler, Doubleday.

Books
Bernard Baskin

One's first reaction to the title of this book is surprise and laughter. Actually, it is a serious attempt to bring to life a little-known chapter in Jewish history: how a small group of Jewish merchants and adventurers – in the wake of the Spanish Inquisition – became free-wheeling outlaws on the high seas.

Their ships carried such names as the Prophet Samuel, Queen Esther and Shield of Abraham. They plundered Spanish and Portuguese possessions, defying those countries that had exiled them.

The author of this detailed, many-sided account is a journalist and historian, and a longtime resident of Jamaica.

In the 15th century, Converso Jews came to Jamaica disguised as Christians.

These newcomers set up sugar factories, pioneered tea, grain and coffee cultivation and traded sugar, tobacco, gold and silver with covert Jews on the Iberian Peninsula.

Other descendants of refugees from the Inquisition settled in Amsterdam and were accepted by the Dutch as a valued merchant class. "They raised their children in the free air of Holland. Over the course of half a century of leadership – 1623-75 – they invaded the world, battled outposts of the Inquisition and orchestrated their people's freedom."

Eventually, liberty reached England as well. On April 3, 1656, London's 35 Jewish families gathered for a Passover seder. After 366 years, they were no longer illegal aliens. "To consecrate this new day, [Oliver] Cromwell's chief intelligencer proudly changed his name to Abraham Israel Carvajal."

The 17th century began with Jews outlawed in the New World and most of Europe, and it closed with most of them free.

As Jewish involvement with piracy petered out in the Caribbean, many of the original intrepid group united in the cause of liberty. During the American Revolution, a dozen prominent Jews sided with the rebels as privateers. Celebrated as fathers of early Jewish congregations, these men owned and operated more than a few of the pirate ships that captured and destroyed more than 600 British ships and took cargos and prizes with an estimated value of $18 million in today's dollars.

No discussion of Jewish piracy should leave out the Jewish heritage of the famous pirate known to Americans as a hero of the Battle of New Orleans. In a hand-written note in his family bible, Jean Lafitte wrote: "I owe all my ingenuity to the intuition of my Jewish-Spanish grandmother, who was a witness at the time of the Inquisition."

Of course, figures are imprecise, but it is estimated that Conversos in the mid-17th century numbered around 10,000 of the 200,000 settlers in the New World.

Unfortunately, with a heritage of denying their faith, most of their descendants of the pirates eventually abandoned their religion. Of the thousands or more Spanish and Portuguese names listed in the Jamaican telephone book, the island's declared Jews today number less than 200.

Verdict: A colourful, well-researched history, somewhat over-detailed, but much of it fresh and exciting.

Passover humour

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Passover humour? No, this isn't some kind of joke. Well, actually it is. Although Passover is more associated with maror than mirth, today we are going to look at the lighter side of the holiday.

These days, it's impossible to enjoy something without receiving a health warning. A group of medical people have published data that indicates seder participants should not partake of chopped liver and charoses as this combination can lead to "charoses of the liver!" **[tinyurl.com/pesachumor01]**

Actually, you can't talk Jewish humour without talking Jewish food. David Bader has taken great strides in simplifying the religion with his Yo-Yo Diet Guide to the Jewish Holidays. He postulates that the Jewish festivals are divided between days on which we must starve and days we must eat.

- Chanukah – eat potato pancakes
- Tenth of Tevet – don't eat potato pancakes
- Tu b'Shvat, Feast
- Fast of Esther – fast
- Purim – eat pastry
- Passover – don't eat pastry
- Shavuot – dairy feast (cheesecake, blintzes, etc.)
- Seventeenth of Tammuz – fast (definitely no cheesecake or blintzes) **[tinyurl.com/pesachumor02]**

That may sound concise, but another wit has condensed the religion even further in the Short Summary of Every Jewish Holiday, certainly applicable to Passover.

They tried to kill us…
We won…
Let's eat! **[tinyurl.com/pesachumor03]**

Try the Passover quiz. Here's a sample question from a huge humour site:

On seder night, we are supposed to drink wine until…
(a) Uncle Irving's jokes sound new to you
(b) You can no longer tell the difference between Pharaoh and Moses
(c) You don't miss bread **[tinyurl.com/pesachumor04]**

Or how about going a round of Passover Jeopardy? The answer: a classroom, a Passover ceremony and a latke

The question: what is a cheder, a seder and a tater? **[tinyurl.com/pesachumor05]**

Passover wouldn't be the same without its wonderful songs. But if you are looking for a break from Dayenu or Chad Gadya, there are plenty of new tunes to try out such as There's No Seder Like Our Seder, Afikoman (sung to the tune of Oklahoma) and the best of the bunch, Our Passover Things.

"Cleaning and cooking and so many dishes/ Out with the chametz, no pasta, no knishes/ Fish that's gefilted, horseradish that stings/ These are a few of our Passover things." **[tinyurl.com/pesachumor06]**

Here are a few cases of truthful humour being funnier than fiction. Matzah, of course, is central to Passover. But not everyone has acquired a taste for our "bread of affliction." Marilyn Monroe was once served matzah ball soup for three meals in a row. Not too impressed, she asked, "Isn't there any other part of the matzah you can eat?" **[tinyurl.com/pesachumor07]**

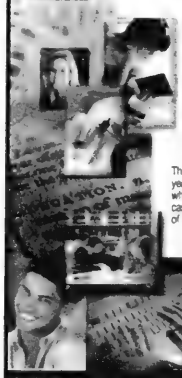
Here are some Biblical Bloopers compiled by Richard Lederer – actual mistakes made by young scholars from around the world. "Moses led the Hebrews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterward, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the Ten Amendments. The First Commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple. The Fifth Commandment is humour thy father and mother. The Seventh Commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery. The Ninth Commandment is thou salt not bare faults witness. Moses died before he ever reached Canada." **[tinyurl.com/pesachumor08]**

And finally, there's this excerpt from the British game show, Are You Smarter Than a 10-year-old?. In one episode, contestant Sarah is asked, "What is the name of the flat, unleavened bread Jews eat on Passover?" Unable to answer, Sarah elicits the help of 10-year-old Lisa, who writes the answer, "matzah," in both English and Hebrew (albeit with a small spelling mistake). I highly recommend watching this clip as Sarah wrestles with her doubts about whether to go with Lisa's response, even after her young helper pleads, "I'm Jewish." **[tinyurl.com/pesachumor09]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

The Dennis Waldman Foundation For Jewish Education

IMPORTANT Scholarship Notice



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בית צדק

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Here comes the Blessing of the Sun

By RABBI DAVID KALB
JTA

I have this internal iPod in my head that provides theme music for my life. Lately my theme song is Here Comes the Sun by the Beatles. Not only is it my theme song, but this year it is the theme song of the entire Jewish people.

Why?

On the 13th of Nissan (April 8), the morning before Erev Pesach (as if we do not have enough to do that day), we will be reciting Birkat Hachamah, the Blessing of the Sun. The blessing, recited every 28 years, marks the time that the sun is in the exact place it was in when the world was created (Brachot 59b).

It may seem strange to recite a blessing that relates to the sun since Jewish observance generally is more oriented toward the moon. Rosh Chodesh, Judaism's celebration of each new month, is based on the new moon and creates the foundation for the Jewish calendar.

So why this Blessing of the Sun? What is the importance of celebrating the anniversary of its creation?

The Torah describes the sun's creation in the Book of Genesis, Chapter 1, lines 14 to 19. We recite these lines from the Torah as part of the Birkat Hachamah service. In lines 14 and 15, God creates two lights that appear to be equal in strength and are responsible for separating day and night, as well as marking holidays, days and years. The Torah does not name these lights, but one can assume that the light of the night is the moon and the light of the day is the sun.

In line 16, however, something happens: the Torah makes a distinction between the lights. God pronounces the light of the day (the sun) to be the greater light and the light of the night (the moon) to be the lesser light.

What causes the change from the apparent equality of sun and moon in lines 14 and 15 to the dominance of the sun in Line 16? Why this dominance of the sun when it is simply not the case in Judaism?

While both the sun and moon play an equal role in separating day and night, the moon, as noted, plays a more dominant role in marking holidays and determining the calendar. Why, then, does God pronounce the sun to be dominant over the moon?

The rabbis of the Talmud tell us a story intimately connected to these lines from the Torah (Chullin 60b). When the sun and moon were created, the rabbis tell us, they indeed were equal. But the moon asked God, "Is it possible for two kings to utilize the same crown?" There cannot be two lights that rule the sky; one must be dominant.

In the story, God seems to have heard the question as a display of the moon's arrogance and punished the moon by having the moon diminish itself. The moon responded, "Is it fitting that because I said a correct thing before You that I must diminish myself?" The moon explained that it was not being arrogant and simply was stating a fact: there cannot be two kings.

God, heeding the moon's words, rescinded the punishment and made the moon more dominant than the sun in determining the calendar and holidays. God also instructed the Jewish people to prepare a *chaparah*, an atonement sacrifice, on God's behalf. In other words, according to the Talmud, God acknowledged that God committed a sin against the moon. The sacrifice was offered every Rosh Chodesh and is fulfilled today by offering the Musaf prayer (the additional prayer) on Rosh Chodesh.

Perhaps in telling this story, the rabbis of the Talmud wished to present a new way of looking at God. The story portrays a God who can commit a sin and do tshuvah, a startling new way to look at God and, certainly, an awesome model for our own practice of tshuvah.

While the Blessing of the Sun marks the anniversary of the creation of the sun, it also may be viewed as the anniversary of this talmudic story. The rabbis told the story to embellish the description of the creation of the sun and the moon in the Torah. Their embellishment created a moment in time in which the Jewish people could look at God in a different way. That moment is commemorated by Birkat Hachamah.

On a more general level, think about the way the sun renews itself each day. This can be seen as a model for the way we might renew our relationship with God. Every day the sun rises and sets; so, too, every day we need to renew our understanding of God. Birkat Hachamah is a unique extension of this idea. Thus I believe that when we recite Birkat Hachamah, we must strive to renew our understanding of God, to re-envision God.

Let me share what will be going on in my mind – my internal iPod – when I recite Birkat Hachamah this year. Recently, I met someone who told me that he had experienced a series of tragedies. He could not reconcile these tragedies with his vision of God, a vision in which God is directly involved in the events of the world. This posed a difficult challenge to his faith in God.

Asked for guidance, I tried to help this individual re-envision God. I explained that it is possible to envision a God who is not directly involved in the events of the world. This is not to say that the vision of God being directly involved in the events of the world is incorrect; God is infinite. Therefore we are able to, and perhaps need to, utilize as many visions of God as possible.

In a vision of God where God is not directly involved in the events of the world, God gives us hope when all we feel is despair, strength when all we feel is weakness and love when all we feel is hate. God gives us these blessings, and with these blessings we have the ability to make miracles happen.

As we recite Birkat Hachamah this year, let us use each day's new light of the sun to continue to look at God in new ways. In so doing, together with God, we renew creation.

David Kalb is the rabbi of Minyan Yavneh on the Upper East Side of Manhattan and the head of academic fellowships at the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

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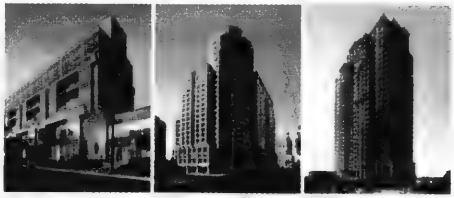

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Group calls for investigation into Palestinian clerics

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center has alerted law enforcement and government officials about the imminent arrival to Canada of two radical Palestinian clergymen who it says hold problematic views that warrant an investigation.

Avi Benlolo, FSWC president and CEO, said Ekrima Sabri, imam of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, and Atallah Hannah, Greek Orthodox bishop of Sebastia, have each made statements about Jews that should concern the Canadian public. Canada's immigration department and intelligence agencies "should investigate this and make an appropriate decision on behalf of all Canadians, to decide whether they should be admitted," Benlolo said.

The two in question are featured guests at an April 5 event sponsored by Palestine House in Mississauga.

Benlolo said they have a long record of statements that are inconsistent with Canadian values of tolerance and human rights.

Sabri, who was appointed Grand Mufti of Jerusalem by former Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat and served from 1994 to 2006, openly supports martyrdom operations against Israel, including those by children. "He's also a Holocaust revisionist. He's questioned the number of six million murdered and he's called it a fairy tale," Benlolo said.

An Internet search revealed that Sabri has taken an extreme position on relations with Jews. Speaking about child martyrs (suicide bombers), he told the Egyptian weekly Al-Ahram Al-Arabi in 2000 (translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute) that, "the younger the martyr, the greater and the more I respect him."

Asked in the interview about "the Jews who are besieging Al-Aqsa," he said, "I enter the mosque of Al-Aqsa with my head up and at the same time I am filled with rage toward the Jews. I have never greeted a Jew when I come near one. I never will. They cannot even dream that I will. The Jews do not dare bother me, because they are the most cowardly creatures Allah has ever created."

He is cited in other media reports praying a month before 9/11 for "Allah [to] destroy the United States, its helpers and agents."

On Palestinian Authority radio in 1997 he said, "Oh Allah, destroy America, for she is ruled by Zionist Jews." In the same radio broadcast, he said, "Allah will take revenge on behalf of his prophet against the colonialist settlers who are sons of monkeys and pigs."

He has consistently denied any Jewish links to Jerusalem. "There is not even the smallest indication of the existence of a Jewish temple on this place in the past," he has said. "In the whole city, there is not even a single stone indicating Jewish history."

He went on to say, "It is the art of the Jews to deceive the world."

He claims all the territory from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River as Palestinian territory and he published a fatwa in 2000 insisting on the right of return and prohibiting compensation in its place. Jews who came to Israel from around the world will be forced to leave, he told the German newspaper, Die Welt.

Hannah has also maintained that Jerusalem is an Arab city.

In July 2002, he was fired from his post as spokesperson by the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem for "supporting the Palestinian terrorism" and for refusing to sign a document condemning Palestinian operations. The Patriarch was later removed from his post following charges of selling land belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church to Zionist settlers

Palestine House did not respond to a CJN request for a comment, but its spokesperson, Samir Jabbour, told the National Post that Hannah is a peace activist and believes Jerusalem belongs to the three monotheistic faiths.

Benlolo criticized Palestine House for bringing speakers whose views are far from the Canadian mainstream values of "tolerance, human rights, dialogue and building bridges."

"By bringing people who foment hate and violence… this should raise the eyebrows of Canadians," Benlolo said.

Correction

The guest voice that appeared in The CJN of March 26 ("Mercaz cuts hurt Jewish unity, continuity') contained some incorrect information about its author, Dr. Jack Lipinsky. It should have read that he teaches at United Synagogue Day School and the University of Toronto and writes curriculum for Facing History and Ourselves, a non-profit program that engages students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and anti-Semitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry.

Court asked to overturn restriction on Galloway

Compiled by CJN Staff

A Federal Court judge on Sunday heard a motion asking that he overturn a government decision to bar British MP George Galloway from Canada. The decision was expected on Monday afternoon, after The CJN went to press.

Organizers of a four-event speaking tour had said they would attempt to escort Galloway across the border, but cancelled that in anticipation of the court decision.

Lawyers for the controversial parliamentarian from the Respect party argued the decision to prevent Galloway's entry was politically motivated and an attack on freedom of expression.

Court documents filed by Galloway's lawyers allege Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney, who has the authority to permit Galloway into the country, harbours a personal dislike of Galloway's political views. "In this context it is an abuse of power and deserving of judicial condemnation," the documents state, according to a report in the Toronto Star.

Kenney has said he will not interfere in a decision by the Canadian Border Services Agency, which has barred Galloway as a security threat. He also stated the Galloway decision was not an issue of limiting free expression.

"It has nothing to do with freedom of speech and everything to do with maintaining the integrity of our Immigration [and Refugee Protection] Act, which says individuals that provide materials and financial support to an illegal terrorist organization are inadmissible for entry into Canada," he said.

Federal authorities allege Galloway has provided financial support to Hamas, a banned organization in Canada.

Galloway admitted as much in an interview with IslamOnline.net. In a posting dated March 12, with a Gaza City dateline, the Internet site reproduces an interview with the British parliamentarian, who was in Gaza along with hundreds of activists who brought more than $1.4 million in aid to the area.

In the lead up to the interview, the website states Galloway was "the main organizer who personally donated three cars and $35,000 (US), a few hours before leaving Palestinian territory."

Asked the reason for his visit, Galloway said "the main one [reason] is to stand beside the legal Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniya. The entire world knows that he was elected, apparently democratically. I have offered him corporeal and financial support. I know that what we have offered is not enough, but is is highly symbolic."

Later, he is asked why the British media didn't cover the journey to Gaza more extensively. Galloway responded: "In a meeting with the BBC, before leaving the U.K., they were astonished that a British parliamentarian gives money to Ismail Haniya despite that the British government considers him illegal.

"I say that this siege is imposed against democracy and nothing illegal here in Gaza [sic]."

Ironically, Galloway supported the U.K. government's decision to bar Dutch parliamentarian Geert Wilders, who made the film Fitna, which examined the qur'anic inspiration for violence in Islam.

"Freedom of speech is not an absolute," Galloway said. Calling Wilders a hater of Muslims, he said "he shouldn't be allowed into our country to whip up that hatred."

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Impressive Hillel leader enters student political minefield

Undemocratic voting procedures alleged in disputed student elections

By Sally Szuster

When 20-year-old Daniel Ferman decided to run as a councilor in York University's recent student elections, he could, by that point, be considered a veteran politician.

He has been among the most quoted members of the Jewish community in his role as president of Hillel@York, where he remains at the centre of a storm that has galvanized Toronto's Jewish community and mobilized Jewish students to expose an atmosphere on campus marked by anti-Semitism, anti-Israel sentiment and a recent wave of intimidation. Hillel is financially supported by UJA Federation.

Now, add allegations of voting irregularities and undemocratic rules governing student elections and the storm in which Ferman finds himself is even more severe.

As a high profile Jewish leader on campus, Ferman has led a call for a return to civil discourse and a new environment in which not just Jewish students but all students can feel safe. Along the way, he has faced the kind of hurdles that most members of the Canadian Parliament would consider "dirty politics."

Daniel Ferman on the York University campus.

"It has been quite the year," said Ferman with a smile. The affable Schulich School of Business student ran in the election with a slate of culturally diverse candidates that represented a mandate to reverse the toxic climate on campus. Ferman was the only one on the slate who won his seat in an election that was plagued with what he calls "dictatorial voting procedures and an attempt by the current anti-Israel student government to thwart all efforts by the York Forward slate" on which Ferman ran. "The lack of any democratic process in York's student elections would even make dictatorships in the world blush," said Ferman. "We saw everything from extra printing of ballots to an elections committee, responsible for overseeing the voting, that was aligned with the other slate and accountable to no one." Ferman's slate, York Forward, is currently asking the York administration to overturn the election results.

Ferman's activism was prompted, in large measure, by his experience on February 11th, as one of the Jewish students in the York Hillel Lounge who was barricaded by anti-Israel protesters yelling anti-Semitic and anti-Israel slurs. Hillel, together with other student groups, such as Hasbara Fellowship and the Canadian Centre for Israel Activism, and Jewish community organizations have been demanding that the York administration take strong action to protect Jewish students on campus. Police and university investigations into the February 11th incident are underway and the university has formed a task force to examine the current campus climate and how it can be improved.

"Jewish students have been living with this poisoned atmosphere on campus for some time. But the events on February 11th really exposed York's complacency to the world," said Ferman. "Students were really shaken that it took local police to be called onto campus to ensure their safety."

But Ferman sees a bright side to the recent media attention surrounding the escalation of harassment on campus. "The outpouring of support by our community has really inspired the students, and I think it's really reflective of our collective strength. It has also given students a way to understand the role that UJA Federation, along with affiliated organizations such as CIJA and Canadian Jewish Congress, play in our community. We've all been working as such strong partners in restoring an environment where all students can pursue their education free of intimidation and harassment."

UJA Federation honoured for commitment to renewable energy

By Daniel Horowitz

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto was recently honoured for its outstanding contribution to renewable energy projects in southern Israel, specifically in the Eilat/Eilot region, with which UJA Federation is linked through its Partnership 2000 initiative.

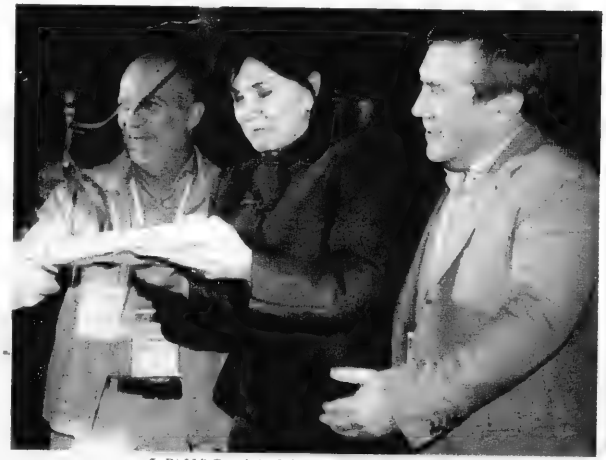
The Brian Medwed Award is given by the Regional Council of Eilot in honour of Medwed, who was an avid supporter of renewable energy development in the Arava region and dedicated his time to studying, developing and promoting a number of initiatives in this field.

Over the past three years, UJA Federation - through UIA Canada - has committed over $500,000 to develop the region as a leader in renewable energy. The funding has supported research and development at the renowned Arava Institute, the first renewable energy facility in Israel where students can obtain a Masters degree in the field. The renewable energy initiative also extends to educational programming in high schools and local communities.

The goal of UJA Federation's investment through UIA Canada is to develop the region and nurture a thriving industry for residents who often leave for more urban centres and job opportunities. The Eilat/Eilot region has the highest rates of sunlight in the world.

"Renewable energy will generate job opportunities and prosperity for the residents and make us leaders in the global effort to sustain our planet," said Udi Gat, Chair of the Eilot Regional Council. "All of these factors will contribute to establishing the region as the Silicon Valley of renewable energy. The Toronto Jewish community was the first to believe in the Renewable Energy Project."

The award was presented to Morley Brown, Lorri Kushnir and Ariella Rohringer, members of UJA Federation's Israel & Overseas Committee. "Toronto is justified in feeling elated that its long term support of Eilat has been recognized and rewarded by the Israeli government," said Rohringer. "We should, as well, be uplifted by the consequent growth of this peripheral community's economy and educational institutions, which will inevitably follow as it becomes a renewable energy leader in the world."



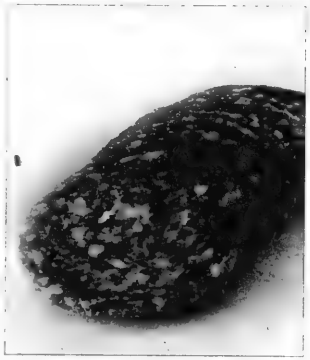
(L-R) Udi Gat, chair of the Eilot regional council presents Lorri Kushnir and Morley Brown, members of UJA Federation's Israel & Overseas Committee, with the Brian Medwed Award.

"Over three years ago we and our Eilat partners had set a goal to transform the region from one perceived as a disadvantaged community to a community of opportunity," explained Kushnir. "And today the region has succeeded in becoming Israel's 'go to' address for all matters relating to renewable energy generally and solar energy in particular. UJA Federation supported this bold initiative from the beginning. This award validates that support."

"UJA Federation was instrumental in convincing the region of Eilot to develop a strategic plan for renewable energy," said Brown. "This helped get the ball rolling. However, all the work on implementing the strategic plan has been done by the people of Eilat and Eilot, and they deserve all the credit. The fact that over 700 people came to the recent renewable energy conference is a testament to their hard work and one indication of their many successes."

Shefa salami recalled in listeria scare

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter



Local retailers are assuring their customers that they didn't sell any Shefa salami that the company had to recall because of a listeria scare.

Kosher butchers at the Sobey's on Clark Avenue West in Thornhill and at Toronto Kosher said they didn't receive any of the recalled batch of salamis, and at the Real Canadian Superstore at Dufferin Street and Steeles Avenue, the kosher butcher said the store did receive a small number of packages, but it sent them back to Shefa before anyone could buy them.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency issued a recall notice on March 24 that warned the public about some batches of Shefa brand salami because the product may be have been contaminated with listeria monocytogenes.

The affected product is sold in 750-gram packages bearing lot code 2831, UPC number 8 13217 00179 7, and a best-before date of June 2.

The product was distributed in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario.

In a press release, the CFIA said there have been no reported illnesses associated with the consumption of this product.

It said that food contaminated with listeria monocytogenes may not look or smell spoiled. Consumption of contaminated food may cause listeriosis, a food-borne illness that can cause high fever, severe headache, stiff neck and nausea. Pregnant women, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems are particularly at risk.

Manny Alter, manager of Toronto Kosher, said the recall was precautionary and consumers shouldn't worry.

Calls to Shefa representatives were not returned by The CJN's deadline. An administrative assistant said owner Yaakov Luss was too busy dealing with increased Passover production to comment.

UJA Federation studying impact of provincial budget

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Jewish organizations are studying the implications of last week's Ontario budget, which includes the introduction of a blended sales tax of 13 per cent, deficit spending, lower corporate taxes and boosts in infrastructure spending.

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto is "in the middle of its analysis," said Howard English, the organization's vice-president of communications. "UJA Federation is consulting with its partner agencies."

The budget was also "a significant topic of discussion at a meeting of volunteers who are working on issues of poverty in the Jewish community," he said.

Among the areas that are being investigated are the budget's potential effect on "affordable housing, home care, and the difficult financial situation faced by Jewish Family and Child. Also money for new immigrant training," English said.

Among the budget's highlights was harmonization of the eight per cent provincial sales tax and the five per cent federal GST, which will take effect on July 1, 2010. The blended tax will increase consumption taxes on a variety of items that are not currently subject to provincial levies, including home purchases over $500,000. To offset the increased costs, families earning $160,000 or less annually will receive one-time payouts totalling $1,000, while single Ontarians will receive $300.

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SENIORS HELP OUT: The residents and staff of three local retirement homes – Pine Villa, Forest Hill Place and Terrace Gardens – recently wrapped up a successful Passover food drive. As a result of the support of the seniors and community donations, $1,800 and numerous food items were donated to the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto section's Passover Food Drive. All three residences were drop-off locations for this year's drive. Pictured, from left, are Devorah Ohayon, food drive co-chair Karen Fenwick, Judy Levy, food drive co-chair Debbie Wasserman and Deborah Heller-Raphael.

Streamlining Mercaz frees up cash for education

By DAVID KOSCHITZKY

Former U.S. president John F. Kennedy once said that change is the law of life. It is certainly the law of community life, especially when contemporary challenges compel us to find new ways of doing things while keeping our commitment to core values and the Jewish future.

Our community's commitment to Jewish education is a core value that will never change. However, in order to both maintain and strengthen that commitment, we need to develop a different method of delivering Jewish education programs and services rather than relying solely on a large, central planning body to perform that function. The strength of our community's Jewish education system should not be dependent on the maintenance of such an administrative entity. In these challenging economic times, our donors expect us to maintain, if not expand, essential services, while, at the same time, watching costs carefully.

David Koschitzky

Streamlining the Mercaz into a smaller department allows UJA Federation of Greater Toronto to increase direct financial support to Jewish education, through an additional $500,000 for tuition subsidies, bringing our subsidy-related assistance to more than $10 million. We can also guarantee ongoing funding for supplementary schools and continuing allocations for children with special needs. In both cases, we're even hoping to enhance funding. And UJA Federation is publicly committed to making sure there's enough money for the educational services that our community counts on. All this will be undertaken through a robust partnership with affiliated schools to determine priority programs and services – a partnership in which our community's schools will be playing a much more prominent role, for which they are well suited.

Based on UJA Federation-school consensus, the Board of License will continue. So will the Midrasha, PD days, the Bible contest, Rikudiya, Zimriya, the creative writing contest, the media lending library and many more significant services to which the community has become accustomed. The process of constant consultation will most likely produce several new ideas, as well, to benefit the community. All of these initiatives may be delivered differently, but, as long our schools, in concert with UJA Federation, attest to their importance, they will be part of Toronto's educational landscape.

Whether educational initiatives are delivered by a large, education administration or by other means will have minimal impact on the recipients of these services. The federation's financial commitment is there to maintain them, precisely because the old, centralized Mercaz is being streamlined.

This is what capacity-building is all about. It is not service duplication. It is co-operation, consensus, a quest for innovation and genuine partnership designed to strengthen schools rather than relying on a central entity to do it all.

Change is, indeed, difficult, but, as JFK also said, "Those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." Our community's commitment to Jewish education is extraordinary. So is our understanding of the link between Jewish education and our Jewish future. The Mercaz restructuring strengthens that link.

David Koschitzky is chair of the board, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Guest Voice

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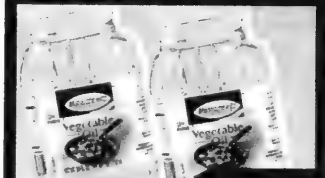

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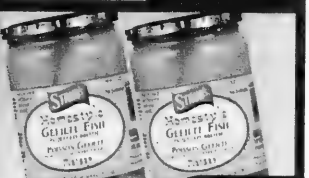

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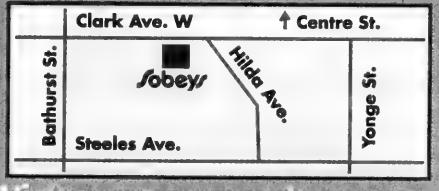

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Orthodox elementary school to close

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Ohr HaTorah Day School in Winnipeg will be closing its elementary school next year in light of low enrolment and financial difficulties.

Joseph Cohen, a founder of the 10-year-old modern Orthodox school and its current president, told The CJN that it's "virtually certain that there will be no grade school at Ohr HaTorah Day School next year, but only a program from preschool to kindergarten [which is at capacity this year]."

The development comes after the school's new principal, Rabbi Uriel Malka, left suddenly and returned to Israel with his wife and children after only six months on the job.

"Things just did not work out, unfortunately," Cohen said.

"We paid to fly him and his family back to Israel," rather than have him continue to serve out the rest of the year, he added.

Cohen said he was not at liberty to say more, except that the move was best for everyone involved.

According to Cohen, currently there are only five children in the school from grades 1 to 4. There had been eight, but two of them were Rabbi Malka's children and another child has moved to the Gray Academy of Jewish Education, the city's main community day school, which serves children from junior kindergarten to Grade 12.

"We have asked the Jewish Federation [of Winnipeg] for a sum of $30,000, which we need in order to finish out the school year. The federation has said it will provide us the money on the basis that we negotiate in good faith with Gray Academy to see if we can merge with them and provide an enhanced religious track in Gray Academy."

However, Cohen said he isn't optimistic about a merger. If talks are unsuccessful, he said he'll have to decide where to send his children next year.

"It is possible I will send them to public school, such as Brock Corydon [which has a Hebrew-language instructional program] and give them religious teaching after school… My family will consider all of its options in order to decide what is best for our children," he said.

Federation CEO Bob Freedman said the federation approved $30,000 in financial assistance to Ohr HaTorah "predicated on an accommodation between Ohr HaTorah and Gray Academy."

When asked whether the federation would still give Ohr HaTorah the money if a deal with Gray Academy isn't reached, Freedman said, "If there is no accommodation [between Ohr HaTorah and Gray Academy], then we'll have to revisit this issue."

Both Freedman and Cohen confirmed that merger talks have been taking place for more than three months, but said they couldn't provide details at his time.

Ohr HaTorah, located in the building of Herzlia Adas-Yeshurun Synagogue, celebrated its 10th anniversary last year. Chabad also runs a small elementary school in Winnipeg, but Cohen said he won't send his children there.

PESACH PROJECTS: Grade 2 students at Leo Baeck Day School's north campus have been doing Passover-themed activities in Hebrew class, writing about Pesach and creating their own seder plates to learn where every item goes so that they can share their knowledge at their family seders. Pictured with their projects, clockwise from top left, are Jillian Rashkovan, Kaitlyn Balter, Kelsey Shulman, Kiley Kramer and Samantha Bensky.

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Coast to Coast

Nuclear threats 'unacceptable'

Continued from page 3

And those discussions... have to include as the central item of business with the Iranians: you can't talk to Israel this way, it's got to stop. And if they stop, then things become possible. If not, we'll be back in the deep freeze for a long time to come."

Would Ignatieff be in favour of having an explicit statement and commitment from a number of countries regarding the safety of Israel that might be used to dissuade Iran from ever deploying nuclear weapons against the Jewish state?

"I think Iran is fully aware... that nuclear threats toward Israel are unacceptable and will be met with... 'credible deterrence' – let's put it that way. I don't think the Iranian regime... is in any doubt about the determination of Israel's allies to defend her."

In the Guardian of April 19, 2002, Ignatieff was quoted as saying, "Two years ago, an American friend took me on a helicopter ride from Jerusalem to the Golan Heights over the Palestinian West Bank. He wanted to show me how vulnerable Israel was, how the Arabs only had to cross 11 kilometres of land to reach the sea and throw the Israelis into it. I got this message, but I also came away with another one. When I looked down at the West Bank, at the settlements like Crusader forts occupying the high ground, at the Israeli security cordon along the Jordan river closing off the Palestinian lands from Jordan, I knew I was not looking down at a state or the beginnings of one, but at a bantustan, one of those pseudo-states created in the dying years of apartheid to keep the African population under control."

In last month's interview, Ignatieff was asked to clarify what he meant in his earlier statement.

"All my adult life, [I've] made it clear that... it's illegitimate to compare Israel to apartheid South Africa, and let's be very clear why – because all citizens of Israel have equal rights. In apartheid South Africa, people were excluded from full citizenship on the basis of race. And that was denounced as a crime against humanity. So I've never, ever, in my life equated Israel and apartheid South Africa.

"I think what I meant in using the terminology I used... in 2002 is something that I think is as evident to Israelis as it is to anybody else, which is that the only way out of the horror and the tragedy in the Middle East is a two-state solution in which Israel has absolutely solid guarantees of its security and international legitimacy, and the Palestinian state is viable enough to survive.

"I think my choice of words was not of the best, but the point was not to equate Israel to apartheid South Africa but to say, for Israel's own security, the Palestinian state that will eventually emerge in the West Bank and Gaza must be viable. It's not for me to say what viability amounts to. It's not for me to define what the boundaries and frontiers should be. That's between the two parties. But it ought to be viable."

As for the rise of anti-Semitism in the European mainstream, Ignatieff said, "It's not just in Europe. I'm very concerned about the statements by [President] Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. I'm very concerned about Durban II, the flagrant misuse of international UN bodies to promote this entirely false equation between Zionism as a kind of racism. We've been here with this for 30 years. So some of the phenomena of anti-Semitism are not new in Canada, and I'm aware there are Jewish communities in Canada that feel a degree of insecurity in Canada they've never felt before.

"My predecessor [Stéphane Dion] committed to work with... not just the Jewish community, but any community that feels its security is in danger, to make sure they have the means to protect and defend their schools – all their establishments – because the bottom line for me as a Canadian politician is that every Canadian citizen must have a right to be who they are, say who they are, affirm their identity proudly, and go about their business in security.

"And the general atmosphere out in the world is of increasing hostility to the Jewish people. Canada has to make a very clear statement that that's unacceptable, that all citizens in Canada are entitled to go about their business in peace and security."

If the Liberals are elected, Ignatieff said he will honour Dion's promise of $75 million to ethnic communities for increased security. "I'm reiterating that pledge," he said. "The question of whether that's the dollar figure we end up with depends on what the needs are, but the commitment he made I want to reiterate in very strong terms."

PESACH POSTERS: In preparation for Passover, Grade 5 students at Bialik Hebrew Day School designed posters to depict the various names by which Pesach is known, and wrote Hebrew stories about past family seders. Displaying their stories here are, from left, Ethan Sacoransky, Lihi Taiber, Sydney Turk and Jack Wunder.

Ex-envoy suggests sharing Jerusalem

By RON STANG
Special to The CJN

WINDSOR — Michael Bell, former Canadian ambassador to Israel, Egypt and Jordan, says that, despite myriad rounds of negotiations in the Mideast peace process, no one has come up with a relatively straightforward plan for shared governance of Jerusalem's Old City.

"It does sound surprising even to me, and I've been involved in this stuff since 1975, pretty well continuously," he said. "But the simple fact is it has not been done."

Michael Bell

Bell, a Windsor native and currently the Paul Martin Senior Scholar on International Diplomacy at the University of Windsor, is co-founder of the Old Jerusalem Initiative, a university-based attempt to find "creative options" for governance and management of the walled city. In the current issue of the journal Foreign Affairs, he and Daniel Kurtzer, former U.S. ambassador to Israel and Egypt, put forward a proposal for a "special regime" that would be administered jointly by Israelis and Palestinians.

Currently, Israel claims sovereignty over all of Jerusalem, although its claim over the Old City and eastern Jerusalem isn't recognized by many nations.

Bell said initiative members have spoken to "many, many people" on both sides, including Gilead Sher, Israel's lead negotiator at Camp David in 2000, and Canada's Jean de Chastelain, who played a pivotal role in drafting Northern Ireland's Good Friday accord. Those officials "seem to recognize that this may be something worth looking at if and when" there is an opening in the peace process to adopt it, he said.

The reason for focusing on Old Jerusalem is obvious. The less-than-one-square-kilometre area is home to some of the most sacred sites for Jews and Muslims, places that are physically linked and inextricably shared, including the Temple Mount and Western Wall and the Islamic edifices the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

"We're not trying to ram anything down anybody's throat," said Bell, who started the project earlier this decade at University of Toronto's Munk Centre for International Studies. But the team, which includes other former Canadian Middle Eastern foreign affairs officers Michael Molloy and John Bell, came to the realization that previous plans remained contradictory to the unique social and physical environment that is the Old City, with its Muslim and Jewish quarters.

Those other options include one or the other side having full sovereignty "or they split too vertically or horizontally," Bell said. The team didn't think those proposals "would really work, be viable, be sustainable" because of the region's instability.

Under Bell's group proposal, "we tried to develop a regime that ultimately Palestinians and Israelis would be the masters of what would really be a separate authority that could deal with crises, what have you, independently."

Under the proposal, Israelis and Palestinians would choose an executive board, would decide how the board is configured, and would choose a chief administrator – who might be someone from neither camp to allay suspicions of each side – with the official being responsible to the board.

The regime's mandate would be determined jointly, but two key areas of administrative control would be security and holy site management, "which the regime wouldn't take over from the proprietors of these sites, but would really, I suppose, replace the Israeli government in its role."

Bell said the proposal could be part of wider two-state negotiations and could be taken off the shelf whenever Israelis and Palestinians begin such talks.

"Yeah, I suppose it is asking a lot," he said. "But our belief is that absent something like this, there will be no peace."

According to Bell, previous attempts at structuring control such as this decade's Geneva Accord set up a system that would be too unstable. Certain streets would be blue for Israel, green for Palestinian and one with Palestinian sovereignty but Israeli police control.

"Well, we just don't think that would endure for very long, given the inevitability of some kind of tensions and conflict," he said.

Bell said the plan isn't a form of internationalism, as some critics have called it. "It's not internationalism in any classic sense, because Israelis and Palestinians would come up with the ideas. They would determine the mandate."

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Canada-Israel Committee, said that while Bell's proposal is "sincere and it's perceived that way by everybody he presents it to," there are weaknesses.

"I think the Israeli perspective is that it has only been under Israeli sovereignty that every religion has been able to ensure free access… to their own particular religious sites."

He noted that while the Temple Mount has significance for Muslims, it's "not comparable" to how important it is for Jews.

"For us it's the only holy place," while to Muslims it is "a distant third to Mecca and Medina," Fogel said.

Nevertheless, he added, Israel ensures the sanctity of the Dome "and controls access in favour of Muslim sensitivities. And I think that's the kind of evidence that suggests an authority that takes seriously the rights of all stakeholders to a sense of ownership of their own particular site."

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גידי קורן וחברים

"זה הזמן שכואב"

חמש שנים עברו מאז שהלך מאיתנו המשורר נתן יונתן. חמש שנים של עצב וכאב. למשפחתו ואוהביו, חמש שנים של געגוע להלה עצום ורב של אוהבי שירתו. רבים מאיתנו חשים שהגיע הזמן לשנות סיון ולהתחיל להגות את היום וכמה ייתר נאות באשר התגות את "פרס נתן יונתן לשירה עברית" שיוענק בבוצי לאפרייר בבית אריאלה בתל אביב. וכמה סמלי ששלושים ושש שנה אחרי נפילת בנו ליאור בלחלמת יום כיפור באורגוי שוחה את חיי המשורר ושירתו- הזוכת הראשון בפרס נתן יונתן גם הוא ליאור. המשורר ליאור שניצברג הירושלמי. שחזה בן שש בחלמת יום כיפור.

פרס נתן יונתן שונה מאחיו הבכירים בכך שאחת לשנתיים היא יחגוג את הפעמים שבין השורה לבין הלחן שלה.

לא סוד הוא שיש אלה שמאמינים שברגע שטירה מילחנה היא פוחתה בערכה, ובעבע הענין המשירה הופך לשבוגאי. ויא כך היא. כשמצאתי ב 1974 את השיר "כני בדדה" בספר שיריו של נתן יונתן. ניתי ציגם דכירו את השיר. בעקבית הלחנתי וביצועו על ידי להקת האחים והאחיות- ביאת אלפי אנשים טרים "אם זר קוצים כואב זה בה שאת אוהבת". וכך הפכה שירת יחיד לשירת רבים. ואם הטעי בקיץ הקרוב לכרמיאל, תראו אלפי מחוללים ורוקדים ציחדיו" כמו בלהה" ושפתותיהם אוכרות "אם זר קוצים כואב". וימני מספר שנים ציצר תל אביבי עכר שלש חוצות עליו הדפיסה העירה את "כמו בלהה". עניד מתחה לחלון אהיבתו, ביקש את יהה ושר לה "אם זר קוצים כואב". גם זו שירה.

בבבוא לספר שיריו המולחנים בעצם נתן יונתן את גדול משוררי גרבניה בתחילה המאה העשרים, ויילקה. שאבר את הדברים הבאים על המפגש של השיר והלחן:

"אם זה זמר של עששית או קולה של סערה....תציד רוחש באחוריך לחן רחב, הנרקם באלף קולות. שבו יש פה ושם ביטוי רסולו שיך....כיהו כאמנות של תקצע האמיתי: לרדת בין הטילים הגבוהות אל תוך לחן משותף...."

הינה קטע מציר נפלא שהשאיר נתן יונתן בעזבונו. שיר שנתן בפיה של אשה, שהלחנתי ויושר לראשונה בערב הזה:

"זה הזמן אהובי, שכואב לי נורא.
כמו פרפר שנולכד בעיצוי המנורה.
משהו שרציתי כל כך לא קרה.
ולכי יש עוד כוח לשוב הזרה?"

מדוע ישראלים עוזבים את ישראל

את השאלה הזאת אפשר לשאול מסיבות רבות. אבל אצל ד"ר לילך לב ארי זה הנושא העיקרי למחקריה. פעם קראו להם יורדים. עכשיו המושג הזה מתפוגג. לדבריה, לאור תופעת ההגירה הגלובאלית, ואולי כי החברה הישראלית יותר בטוחה בעצמה ואינה מרגישה מאוימת ו"נבגדת".

הינה מספר רעיונות מרכזיים ממחקרה של לב ארי:

בכל העולם יש בערך כ 350 אלף מהגרים ישראלים, כשהגדרת "מהגר" היא אדם שנמצא מחוץ לישראל יותר משנתיים. כחציים נמצאים באה"ב, כשקנדה נמצאת במקום השני.

לדברי לב ארי הסיבה המרכזית להגירה היא שיפור מצב כלכלי. ובשום אופן לא המצב הבטחוני, שהוא אמנם עילה לקיטורים בארץ אבל לא לירידה. המהגרים שייכים לשתי קבוצות שונות ומובדלות- בעלי מקצועות חפשיים (הייטק, מהנדסים, רופאים), ואלה שבאים מהמעמד הכלכלי הנמוך ושואפים לשפר את מעמדם הכלכלי בצורה גורפת.

לדברי ד"ר לב ארי, יש הבדל גדול בין אלה שהיגרו מישראל בשנות השמונים והתשעים, שמחזים עצמם כיורדים ומרגישים בצורך להתנצל על כך, לבין המהגרים של שנות האלפים שאינם מרגישים בצורך להתנצל ומרגישים שלא "ירדו" אלא דווקא "עלו" למקום טוב ובטיח יותר.

הנסיון האישי שלי מסכים עם החלוקה הזאת שיצרה לב ארי, והיא משקפת דור שרואה את הדברים שונה לגמרי.

אבל שישאר בינינו.

On Campus

Appeal seeks to overturn York U vote

By SHERI SHEFA
Staff Reporter

The slate that was defeated in last month's undergraduate elections at York University has filed an appeal to invalidate the results because of incidents it says "compromised the integrity" of the vote.

York Forward – which ran against the policies of the outgoing York Federation of Students executive, accusing it of being too focused on non-campus issues such as the the Arab-Israeli conflict and York's recent 12-week strike by contract faculty and teaching assistants – was defeated in all but one of the races it contested by a rival slate called Students First.

But in an 11-page appeal to the YFS elections committee, it detailed a number of "procedural irregularities" and "suspicious circumstances," as well as all the times it was penalized with demerit points during the campaign, which nearly resulted in its disqualification.

Nearly 8,000 students – out of almost 46,000 undergraduates – voted between March 17 and March 20, the highest voter turnout in York's history.

This year's campaign was particularly contentious, because York Forward was born out of the Drop YFS campaign, a student-run initiative to have the outgoing YFS executive impeached due to its support for the recent strike, which shut down the university and threatened to wipe out the academic year.

Students First, the slate that swept the five executive positions and most of the 14 council positions, supported the outgoing YFS executive, which has been accused by some of having an anti-Israel bias and contributing to rising tensions between pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli students on campus.

Krisna Saravanamuttu, the YFS president-elect and the outgoing vice-president of equity, is alleged to have led a mob of about 100 anti-Israel protesters that barricaded Jewish students in the Hillel lounge on Feb. 11 while yelling anti-Israel and anti-Semitic slurs following a Drop YFS press conference.

The appeal by York Forward charges that one of the problems with the election process is that a few years ago, the rules were changed so that York's administration no longer oversees the vote.

"The election is now 'monitored' by a chief returning officer (CRO) who is overseen by a three-person panel, the elections committee, all of whom are now appointed by the [outgoing] YFS government," the appeal said.

As a result, the appeal suggests, the allies of one set of candidates unduly influenced this year's vote.

"When one of two slates controls the entire election process, exerts force and intimidation throughout the campaign, uses questionable balloting procedures with unnumbered ballots, implements ill-conceived counting measures (no counting measures are outlined in the [YFS election] by-laws)… this cannot be considered a fair or democratic election," the appeal said.

"On behalf of the thousands of students that supported York Forward and the countless number of people who value democracy, we ask that the results of this election not be accepted."

One of the complaints in the appeal referred to demerit points given to York Forward by CRO Casey Chu Cheong each time someone from the slate mentioned Saravanamuttu's involvement in the Hillel lounge incident. She said that mentioning his role defamed him and misrepresented the facts.

"Whenever we made a comment about his involvement in the Feb. 11 incident, not only us, but anyone who was part of our campaign team, we would get demerit points for that… [for saying that he was] involved in a hate crime," said York Forward campaign manager Carly Caruso.

According to Excalibur, York's campus newspaper, demerit points were also given to York Forward for "intent to invite third-party interference" for copying York administration on e-mails to the CRO, as well as for unintentional and intentional "misrepresentation of the facts" and for distributing "unapproved campaign materials" after it handed out copies of Excalibur.

Even though these demerit points didn't ultimately lead to York Forward's disqualification, Caruso said mandatory midday meetings to appeal them took up valuable campaign time.

Students First also received demerit points for pre-campaigning, poster violations and "unintentional misrepresentation of fact," but Caruso said they weren't given to Students First as often as they should have been.

The report outlined two incidents in which Students First campaigners violated the election code and the CRO didn't penalize them.

In response to the claim that the Students First slate was treated more leniently, Chu Cheong said that she "followed the guidelines as outlined in the elections code… to the T."

Speaking to The CJN moments before she was to meet with members of York Forward to discuss their appeal, Chu Cheong said she wouldn't consider the section about Saravanamuttu.

"I made it very clear to the York Forward campaigners that I will not be discussing that. That is a matter between the police and Hillel," Chu Cheong said.

Caruso also alleges that voting irregularities took place throughout the four-day voting period.

"We had people who were not able to cast a ballot. They went to vote at the polling stations and their names had been removed from the list. One of our executives couldn't even vote… A computer malfunction was one of the reasons given, and sometimes a reason wasn't even given."

The appeal said one student was told by a poll clerk that some names were "accidentally" removed from the voter list, which is meant to indicate they have already voted.

Chu Cheong admitted that names missing from the voter list was an issue during the election. "In our experience, it may have been because their last name was difficult to input, and that tends to happen," she said.

But, she added, there is a system in place to allow students whose names were not on the list to vote.

"What we would do is accept their votes and verify them with the students list in the registrar's office, and if they are a student, they are included."

She said a number of such votes are still being examined and will be counted if they're verified by the registrar.

The final results, which were still unofficial by The CJN's deadline, are expected to be ratified by the YFS this week.

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Qualified applicants please send a confidential resume & cover letter by 5pm, April 22, 2009:
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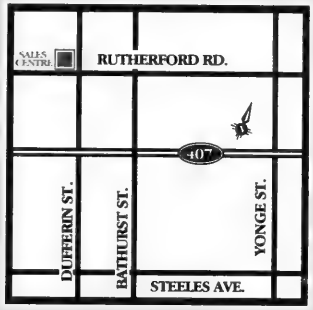

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What's New Deadlines. NOTE HOLIDAY DEADLINES. Monday, April 6, is the deadline for the April 23 issue and Monday, April 20, is the deadline for the April 30 issue. I receive calls on deadline days only. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail rnadler@cjnews.com.

Thursday, April 2

ORGANIC GARDENING

Learn about a new project that supports and promotes Jewish organic agriculture in the GTA. Meet Jewish organic farmer **Daniel Hoffman** and find out about the Tikkun Adamah Community Supported Agriculture project in Thornhill. 7:30-9:30 at the CHAT Kimel Education Centre, 9600 Bathurst St. www.torathateva.org/csa.htm

Saturday, April 4

FIRST MITZVAH

Rabbi Moshe Stern delivers a Shabbat Hagadol drashah on "An Analysis of the First Mitzvah in the Torah: The Future of the Jewish People Guaranteed." 6:10 p.m. at Shaarei Tefilla Congregation. Men and women welcome.

Sunday, April 5

HEALING PROGRAM

Jewish Healing Program presents a healing service facilitated by **Rabbi Ed Elkin**, of the Narayever Congregation, and **Yehudit Judy Shier Weisberg**. 3-4 p.m. at the Miles Nadal JCC. Wheelchair accessible. 416-638-7800, ext. 287

DOING A GREAT SEDER

Temple Har Zion presents **Rabbi Cory Weiss** on "How to Do a Great Seder." Learn about traditional seders that honour our ancestors and that bring our sages to life and about modern seders that reflect our lives in this time and place. 11 a.m. at the Leo Baeck Day School, 36 Atkinson Ave.

Wednesday, April 8

GET RID OF CHAMETZ

Beth David Congregation invites the community to bring its chametz for ritual elimination at 8:30 a.m. Preceded by Shacharit services at 7 a.m. and culmination ceremony for first-born males and breakfast. 416-633-5500

Other News

TEMPLE KOL AMI SPEAKER

Temple Kol Ami hosts **Rabbi Michael Cook**, professor of Judeo-Christian Studies, Hebrew Union College, discussing "Enhancing Jewish Well-Being in a Christian Environment," at Friday, April 3, 7:45 p.m. Shabbat services. He also leads Torah study and services on Saturday, April 4, 9:30 a.m. 36 Atkinson Ave. 905-709-2620

COMMUNAL SEDERS

Chabad of Danforth Beaches hosts two seders with **Rabbi Sholom Lezell**, the first Wednesday, April 9, 8:15 p.m. and the second seder, Thursday, April 9, 8:15 p.m. $40, children $25. RSVP by Friday, April 3, to Chabaddb.com or 416-809-1365.

Chabad of Midtown, Miles Nadal JCC and Jewish Family and Child host a seder Wednesday, April 8, 7:30-10:30 p.m. at the Miles Nadal JCC. Enjoy an inspirational seder and gourmet Passover dinner in a traditional setting led by **Rabbi Nechemia Dietsch**. Reserve, Chabad, 416-516-2005, or Jewish Family and Child, 416-961-9344. $60, $35 per child ages 3-12.

Temple Har Zion hosts a seder led by **Rabbi Cory Weiss**. Thursday, April 9, 6:30 p.m. $60, $30 children (4-12) $30. 905-889-2252

THIRD SECULAR SEDER

The Winchevsky Centre hosts its secular community Passover third seder with Yiddish singer **Adrienne Cooper**, Saturday, April 11, 4:30 p.m. Admission, $45 for adults, $25 for children aged 3-6, $30 for children aged 7-12, $30 students/unwaged, and includes a Haggadah reading, music, drama and a traditional Passover dinner. Reserve, www.winchevskycentre.org or 416-789-5502.

Continued on page 27

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What's New

Continued from page 26

CONCERT: WAR & PEACE

In celebration of Passover, **Adrienne Cooper** performs at Every Mother's Son: Jewish Songs of War and Peace, a multimedia concert that features songs in Yiddish, Ladino, Hebrew and English, including original compositions spanning the worlds of jazz, klezmer and 20th-century classical music. Accompanied by pianist **Marilyn Lerner**. Sunday, April 12, 8 p.m. at Holy Blossom Temple, April 12, 2009, 8 p.m. $25. Tickets, 416-789-3291, ext. 224 or www.holyblossom.org.

COMEDY NIGHT

Beth Radom Congregation presents **Robert Cait** in Kosher For Passover Comedy Night, Saturday, April 11, 8 p.m. Tickets from $36, 416-636-3451, ext. 21 or 24.

LIBERATION SEDER

Experience a seder fashioned by the New Israel Fund of Canada and **Rabbi Lawrence Englander** at Beth Tzedec Congregation to celebrate Israel. Monday, April 13, 7:30 p.m. $36, $18 for each additional ticket and for students, 416-781-4322 or seder09@nican.org.

MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE

Getting older brings with it new challenges. Join **Beverly Adler**, Baycrest social worker, and **Barbara Burnett**, of Seniors For Seniors, for information on services that can enable individuals to function independently at home and in the community. Monday, April 20, 1:30-3 p.m. Register, 416-785-2500, ext. 3374 or lkamenitz@baycrest.org.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Beth Sholom Synagogue Music Series offers an evening featuring members of the Beth Sholom professional choir accompanied by **Brahm Goldhamer**. Thursday, April 23, 8 p.m. $18. Tickets, 416-783-6103.

PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM

Baycrest Centre is recruiting volunteers to become part of its Palliative Care team. Volunteers will spend time with patients who are in their last stages of life and will contribute an enormous amount of emotional support and guidance to the patients and their families. All volunteers must complete a general orientation. Training begins in April. Register, 416 785-2500, ext. 2572.

JEWISH INFO SERVICE

Jewish Information Service of Greater Toronto, UJA Federation, is one-stop Jewish shopping. We have information on community events, holidays, shuls, camps and kosher restaurants. Call and let us help with your Jewish needs, 416-635-5600, or look for us on the web at jewishtoronto.com and click on Doing Jewish In Toronto.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Hospice Thornhill needs volunteers for in-home support to palliative clients, for day program and office, and for planning and working committees for hospice events. Also, drivers and bereavement facilitators are needed. Volunteer training course is scheduled in 2009. acohen@hospicethornhill.org or 905-764-0656 ext 224

GIRLS' THEATRE PROGRAM

Busting Out! is a free theatre program for girls aged 12 to 16 that strives to provide a forum for young women through a series of theatre-based workshops, discussion and collective creation. Participants will have the opportunity to work with professional playwrights, actors and directors on their own writing projects. Includes a public presentation of their own creation. July 6-July 17. Applications, www.nightwoodtheatre.net/index.php/youth_programs/busting_out_2009/. Deadline to apply is April 15. Info, anna@nightwoodtheatre.net or 416 944-1740, ext 6.

JF&CS GROUPS

Jewish Family & Child. 4600 Bathurst St. Call **Shawna**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, for info and registration. www.jfandcs.com.

Successful Step-parenting: Six sessions for couples living in blended families who want to build solid relationships and help children to adjust. Begins Monday, April 6, 7:30-9 p.m. at The Promenade, Suite 313.

When You're About to Separate – What to Tell The Kids: A workshop for parents about to separate or in the early stages of separation on how to best meet your child's needs. Tuesday, April 21, 6:30-9 p.m. at The Promenade, Suite #313.

Widow/Widower 65+ Bereavement: Six-session daytime group for men and women who have recently lost a partner or spouse. Topics: Coping with grief, living with loneliness, changing relationships, and new beginnings. Begins Tuesday, April 28, 1- 2:30 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

Today's Woman: A six-session group for women who want to make a change in their lives. Topics: Time and stress management, building self-esteem, assertiveness and improving communication skills. Begins Tuesday, April 28, 7-9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Building.

SINGLES EVENTS WILL RETURN

FOR SENIORS

LZA Seniors Cultural Club discussion group meets Tuesdays at 10 a.m. at the Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 416-630-9444

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Senior walking group, Tuesday, April 7, 9-10 a.m. Casino Rama, April 22. Lunch and Laughter, Thursday, April 30. Info, 416-395-7881.

Beth Tzedec Haverim Program hosts a discussion and slides of "Southeast Asia, Vietnam, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand and Singapore, seen through Jewish Eyes" with **Rochelle Carrady**. Monday, April 6, 1:30 p.m. $3. 416-781-3511

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE

1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Hearing Clinic in Russian and English, Monday, April 6, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. By appointment, ext. 126.

"Deadly Doses: Recipe for Murder, Toxic Plants and Mushrooms" with **Elaine Freedman**. Tuesday, April 7, 10-11:30 a.m. $3, non-members $6.

Sign up for fitness classes at Betel. New session begins April 5. Prices begin at $3. Call **Amanda**, ext. 126.

WAGMAN CENTRE

55 Ameer Ave. 416-785-2500.

Pesach Tea, Sunday, April 12, 2-3 p.m. in the assembly room. Live entertainment. $3, guests $5. Register, ext. 2267.

BATHURST JCC

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre and Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-636-1880 or www.bjcc.ca.

Passover Break Camp, April 16-17. centrecamp@bjcc.ca or ext. 378.

The Jewish Discovery Museum offers Raising a Mindful Child, a workshop to learn how to use stories rather than discipline to help teach your child important life lessons. Presented by a parenting expert and founder of the accidental storytelling movement in Toronto. April 17-May 8. Info, **Sarah Brodbar-Nemzer**, ext. 390, or discovery@bjcc.ca.

Diane Landry, The Magic Shield, through May 3 at the Koffler Gallery. Ext. 268.

MILES S. NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Cooking with **Itka**, Passover Panic: Keep the Tradition Going. learn to make a seder plate. Sunday, April 5, 1:30-4:40 p.m. $18. Register, ext. 0.

The Toronto Jewish Film Society presents Lies My Father Told Me. Producer **Harry Gulkin** and actor **Marilyn Lightstone** will discuss the film. Sunday, April 5, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Al Green Theatre. $15.

Register for Hebrew classes April-June: Modern Hebrew for Beginners, Level A/Aleph; Modern Hebrew for Beginners, Level B; Modern Hebrew: Intermediate Level; Modern Hebrew Conversation; So, What's New? Reading Israeli Newspapers; Hebrew Prepositions Workshop; Biblical and Siddur Hebrew. Information at jewishlife@mnjcc.org or ext. 154.

Photos of Terezin and Rwanda by **Jeremy Mimnagh** and **Shannon Scully**. Through April 26. Jacobs Lounge Visual Art Space. Ext. 133.

WOMEN WHO HAVE INSPIRED US: Na'amat recently marked International Women's Day with an afternoon tea with Women Who Inspire Us: Past, Present and Future. In the back row, from left, are Anne Balaban, program moderator; Doris Wexler Charow, Na'amat Toronto president; and Reesa Karch, program chair. In the front row, from left, are Rachael Turkienicz, of York University, who spoke about the past; Frances Saltzman, a former RCMP officer, who spoke about the present; and Erin Shapero, a Town of Markham councillor, who spoke about the future. [Mollie Rothman photo]

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Ronnie Wagman	Oct 11/08	4001 Steeles Ave. W.
Lillian Soiferman	Mar 13/09	1035 Eglinton Ave W
Sally Nurgitz	Mar 17/09	7601 Bathurst St
Daniel Gilbert	Mar 17/09	3560 Bathurst St
Burnett Thall	Mar 17/09	15 Rosemary Lane
Abraham Solomon	Mar 19/09	784 Centre St
Clara Klein Nolan	Mar 19/09	225 Wildcat Rd
Lilly Milton	Mar 19/09	2525 Bathurst St
Loretta Grammer	Mar 20/09	50 Forest Heights Bl
Pepi Ross	Mar 20/09	20 Harding Blvd W
Goldie Pollak	Mar 22/09	1131 Steeles Ave W
Jack Feldman	Mar 22/09	210 Roseborough Cr
Annette Donnenfield	Mar 22/09	645 Castlefield Ave
Gary Wilton	Mar 21/09	525 Lawrence Ave W

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Berns, Michael Steven	March 4/09	Private
Gershenzon, Fayvel	March 11/09	5 Tangreen Crt
Lapidus, Harold P	March 11/09	382 Horsham Ave
Greenfield, Harry	March 12/09	6 Powderhorn Millway
Gewarter, Faye	March 12/09	32 Mountview Ave
Shack, Al	March 12/09	100 Canyon Ave
Albin, Saul	March 13/09	76 Glen Rush Blvd
Stone, Janet	March 14/09	3560 Bathurst St
Markus, Regina	March 14/09	95 Charlton Blvd
Klein, Aranka Goldie	March 14/09	1085 Steeles Ave. W
Raben, Izrael	March 15/09	Private
Serebryanny, Ida	March 15/09	22 Norfinch Dr
Alon, Chaya	March 16/09	
Goldman, Alice	March 18/09	9 Alexandra Wood
Reichman, Sonia	March 18/09	7 Warwick Ave
Shpirt, Arnold	March 18/09	Private
Cherlon, Charlotte	March 18/09	1 Clark Ave. W.
Isaac Smith	Mar 13/09	77 Robert Street

Brian Marks ל"ז

beloved son of Hannah and Howard Marks,
and brother of Stephen,
passed away at Mount Sinai hospital,
on Friday, March 20, 2009 after a valiant life.
He was an inspiration to all.

Donations may be made to the Mount Sinai hospital foundation.

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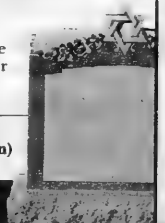

According to Reports

Damning allegations cause media frenzy

Allegations that some Israeli soldiers wantonly violated the Israel Defence Forces' code of conduct during the Gaza military campaign, recklessly killing Palestinian civilians, broke first in the Israeli press. But the story quickly gained prominence in the Canadian and international media as well.

The Toronto Star's Oakland Ross reported on the story March 20 in a piece sensationally headlined "Israeli soldiers ran wild in Gaza; 'The most moral army in the world' killed civilians without cause."

In the article, Ross made it clear that the assertion that Israeli soldiers had killed unarmed Palestinian civilians "without provocation or warning" had come from soldiers' reports at a military college, and that the IDF had pledged to investigate the charges.

Ross cited the stories that had appeared in the Israeli newspapers Ha'aretz and Maariv. The papers alleged that four Palestinian civilians, including two children, had been recklessly killed in two separate incidents during Israel's recent Gaza incursion.

Nonetheless, the headline and front-page placement of the story left the impression of widespread wrongdoing – of an army out of control.

But the Star's sensational treatment paled in comparison with what occurred in the British media, according to the Jerusalem Post editorial "Purity of Arms" (March 22).

The Post said that the BBC "played up [the] claims: 'Israel troops admit Gaza abuses… including cold-blooded murder.' The International Herald Tribune led its Friday paper with 'Grim testimony on Israeli assault: Soldiers report killing of unarmed civilians in Gaza.' And London's matchless Independent splashed its entire front page with 'Israel's dirty secrets in Gaza.'"

In "A farewell to the purity of arms," (Globe and Mail, March 21) Patrick Martin approached the allegations from a more unusual angle – looking at the soul-searching within Israeli society about Jewish ethics and conduct during warfare.

Martin also paid attention to the broader context, noting that the allegations are not unique to Israel: "[S]uch behaviour is found in almost every military force (think Serbs in Bosnia, Americans at Abu Ghraib and Canadians in Somalia) and has existed as long as there has been war."

The National Post's March 23 editorial, "The Middle East's moral gulf" noted, "What is… remarkable is how this all has been handled in Israel itself. As soon as the allegations surfaced, Israel's military advocate general launched an investigation… Israel is an open society in which ordinary soldiers often discuss their combat experiences in op-ed articles, blogs and radio programs. Indeed, this whole story was originally broken by Israeli newspapers."

The Post also observed that, while none of the accounts had been verified, "no one should be surprised if some turn out to be true. No army – even one serving a humane, democratic nation such as Israel, tragically well-practised in the art of counter-terrorism – is staffed by unbroken legions of angels. There are always bad apples."

No doubt this may be true, in a general sense. But a March 25 Jerusalem Post article "Charges of civilian shootings false" by Yaakov Lappin – which appeared just before this column's deadline – cast doubt on the veracity of the charges and raised questions about the media frenzy that surrounded the allegations.

Lappin wrote: "Allegations that IDF soldiers deliberately shot and killed Palestinian civilians in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead have been found to be categorically untrue in official army investigations, an IDF source told the Jerusalem Post on [March 25]." The investigation (which as of that date had not been officially released) found that the soldiers who had made the claims in both cases had not witnessed the events they described but had based their reports on rumours. Moreover, further inquiry ruled out that events had occurred as depicted. An IDF source remarked to Lappin: "Unfortunately, due to competition, sections of the press picked up this story and ran with it. It is a shame the media promoted this sort of spin all over the world."

Lappin concluded: "It is unlikely the damage to Israel's image from the allegations can be repaired, irrespective of the results of the investigation, he noted."

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

Price Chopper

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SATURDAY APRIL 18

► **OPENING NIGHT FILM**
BC 9:15 PM · CAMERA OBSCURA
A Jewish immigrant in Buenos Aires is attracted to an itinerant photographer hired by her husband, a wealthy Jewish rancher.

SUNDAY APRIL 19

AG 10:00 AM · AMOS OZ
A portrait of Israeli writer Amos Oz focuses on his childhood in Jerusalem and the personal tragedies that have fuelled his stories.

*Shown with **LITTLE TRAITOR**, a feature-length adaptation of an Amos Oz story.*

BC 11:00 AM · DUCK SOUP
The Marx Brothers' masterpiece satirizes dictatorships and war, while sending up the Busby Berkeley musicals of the '30s.

BC 1:00 PM · HOLY LAND HARDBALL
The trials and tribulations involved in bringing a baseball league to an unresponsive Israeli population.

AG 1:00 PM · SPELL YOUR NAME
The director and Ukrainian students absorb the testimony of local people who escaped brutal execution and those who rescued friends and neighbours during the Holocaust.

SG 1:00 PM · ARAB LABOR, PT 1
Groundbreaking television comedy series about an Arab journalist who works for a Hebrew newspaper.

SG 3:15 · HEY HEY IT'S ESTHER BLUEBURGER
A 13-year-old private-school girl poses as a Swedish exchange student at the local public school.

BC 3:30 PM · RICHARD RODGERS: THE SWEETEST SOUNDS
Insightful documentary profiling Richard Rodgers, one of the musical theatre's most prolific and brilliant composers, features performances by Sinatra, Coltrane and others.

AG 3:30 PM · MY FIRST WAR
This first-hand look at the Second Lebanon War focuses on the soldiers – their fears, their problems and their reactions to conflicting orders and facts.

SG 5:45 PM · THE GALILEE ESKIMOS
When a luxury spa threatens their kibbutz, a dozen seniors band together and rediscover their pioneering spirit.

BC 6:00 PM · VILLA JASMIN
A Jew learns of his father's activities with the anti-fascist movement in 1930s Tunisia and his torture and imprisonment in a European concentration camp.

AG 6:00 PM · BEING JEWISH IN FRANCE, PT 1
Engrossing documentary chronicles the rich history of Jews in France, from the Dreyfus Affair to current rising anti-Semitism.

SG 8:00 PM · CAMERA OBSCURA
For description, see Saturday April 18, 9:15 PM

BC 8:30 PM · ZRUBAVEL
Mounting tensions between the older generation of Ethiopian émigrés and their children who struggle to assimilate into the Israeli mainstream ignite into conflict.

AG 8:30 PM · A GIFT TO STALIN
A Jewish boy from Moscow, saved from Stalin's ethnic deportations, dreams of finding his parents.

MONDAY APRIL 20

AG 12:00 PM · GALIL: A SCHOOL WITH NO WALLS
An honest, often painful look at the problems faced in a school where Arab and Jewish students strive to understand each other.

BC 1:00 PM · GOLD DIGGERS OF 1933
Musical about three chorus girls seeking work and love during the Depression features classic Busby Berkeley production numbers.

AG 2:00 PM · JERUSALEM DAY
A documentary revealing how the 1967 reunification of Jerusalem has divided some of the city's diverse inhabitants.

Presented with the following short film:

IN JERUSALEM
David Perlov's landmark 1963 film explores perceptions of Jerusalem prior to its reunification.

BC 3:30 PM · FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS
In working-class Paris, a boy's allegiance to his racketeer father is tested as he himself gets pulled into the same underworld.

SG 4:30 PM · VILLA JASMIN
For description, see Sunday April 19, 6:00 PM

AG 5:00 PM · IN THE NAME OF THE VICTIMS
A documentary examining the controversial Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, a body set up to negotiate reparations payments to Holocaust survivors with Germany.

BC 6:00 PM · CYCLES
As they follow their confused mother's journey to find her long-dead husband, a brother and sister re-discover each other and themselves.

SG 6:45 PM · ZRUBAVEL
For description, see Sunday April 19, 8:30 PM

AG 7:00 PM · BEING JEWISH IN FRANCE, PT 2
For description, see Sunday April 19, 6:00 PM

BC 8:30 PM · SHIVA (7 DAYS)
Set during the first Gulf War, this film chronicles a family's mourning process when one of nine siblings dies.

SG 8:30 · LOVE LIFE
A young newlywed, in a self-destructive affair with her father's friend, confronts a secret her parents have long buried. *Warning: Nudity and sexual content.*

TUESDAY APRIL 21

AG 12:00 PM · THE KING AND THE JESTER: THE STORY OF THE LODZ GHETTO
The controversial history of the Lodz Ghetto is told in the form of a battle between a street singer and a Jew working for the Nazis.

Presented with the following short film:

TRANSPORT 2-8-2
The story of Jews saved from the death camps when the Nazis exchanged them for German Templers living in Palestine.

BC 1:00 PM · RUN FOR YOUR LIFE
Documentary chronicles the immigrant success story of Fred Lebow, founder of the New York City Marathon and inventor of modern sports marketing.

AG 2:30 PM · JOSEF AND MARIA
A lonely Holocaust survivor leaves Jerusalem to visit his hometown of Frankfurt, where he falls in love.

BC 3:30 PM · THE BEETLE
A soon-to-be father is torn between his love for his vintage Volkswagen Beetle and his responsibility to his baby.

SG 4:30 PM · LITTLE TRAITOR
In 1947 Jerusalem, an 11-year-old militant befriends a British army officer, changing the two foes' lives forever.

AG 5:00 PM · THE PAJAMA GAME
The representative of a garment-factory grievance committee (Doris Day) falls for the foreman during a dispute. Bob Fosse's screen choreography debut.

THE FIRE WITHIN: JEWS OF THE AMAZONIAN RAINFOREST
A century after Moroccan Jews fled anti-Semitism to settle in the rubber-boom town of Iquitos, Peru, their descendents begin searching for their roots.

Presented with the following short film:

BC 5:30 PM · IN SEARCH OF THE BENE ISRAEL
The story of Bene Israel, a tiny Jewish community in Bombay whose members believe they are descended from one of the lost tribes of Israel.

SG 6:45 PM · A GIFT TO STALIN
For description, see Sunday April 19, 8:30 PM

AG 7:30 PM · PHYLLIS AND HAROLD
Filmmaker offers a candid, multi-sided view of her parents' marriage, uncovering a story that could not have been told while her father was alive.

BC 8:30 PM · I WILL NOT DIE
Canadian violinist Ruth Fazal composes an Oratorio inspired by the writings of children who passed through the gates of the Terezin camp in Czechoslovakia.

SG 9:00 PM · LOST ISLANDS
It's 1980 in Kfar, Israel, and the well-being of an entire family is threatened as a teenage son has to balance family loyalty with his own dreams.

WEDNESDAY APRIL 22

AG 10:30 AM · IRVING BERLIN: MR. SHOW BUSINESS
Toronto musician/lecturer Jordan Klapman presents a free talk on the life and music of American composer and lyricist Irving Berlin.

AG 12:45 PM · DANCING ALFONSO
An elderly flamenco dancer in Tel Aviv refuses to allow age or his wife's death to stop him in his quest for romance.

BC 1:00 PM · BELLS ARE RINGING
An answering-service operator (Judy Holliday) develops a crush on one of her clients, a struggling playwright (Dean Martin), in this brilliant Vincente Minnelli musical.

AG 2:30 PM · PO-LIN: THE SLIVERS OF MEMORY
Using extensive home-movie footage, this remarkable documentary brings to life the Jewish shtetls that dotted the Polish countryside before World War II.

BC 3:30 PM · PAUWELS' CIRCUS
Documentary follows Holocaust survivor Marquis Pauwels, whose family circus is committed to the art of the circus, the family business and the preservation of their Jewish heritage.

SG 4:30 PM · SHIVA
For description, see Monday April 20, 8:30 PM

AG 5:00 PM · HEART & SOUL: THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF FRANK LOESSER
Terrific documentary about tough-talking New Yorker, Frank Loesser, one of the most accomplished and colourful songwriters of his time.

BC 6:00 PM · EL BRINDIS
When a photographer comes to Chile to renew her relationship with her estranged, aging father, she is overwhelmed by a family she does not know.

SG 6:45 PM · CYCLES
For description, see Monday April 20, 6:00 PM

AG 7:30 PM · ARAB LABOR, PT 2
For description, see Sunday April 19, 1:00 PM

BC 8:30 PM · LOVE LIFE
A young newlywed, in a self-destructive affair with her father's friend, confronts a secret her parents have long buried.
Warning: Nudity and sexual content.

SG 9:00 PM · IT ALL BEGINS AT SEA
In this award-winning film, a young boy is initiated into the mysterious worlds of love, sex and death.

AG 10:00 PM · MASHALA
Documentary follows Canadian Singer Ellen Gould Ventura as she explores her roots in Barcelona's medieval Jewish quarter and performs spirited, joyful music.

THURSDAY APRIL 23

AG 12:00 PM · LERNER & LOEWE: BROADWAY'S LAST ROMANTICS
Wonderful documentary featuring extensive rare archival video of the original Broadway musicals written by lyricist Alan Jay Lerner and composer Frederick Loewe.

BC 1:00 PM · SHARON
Revealing documentary offers a private view of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as he muses over art, recalls times long gone and reflects on Israel's past and future.

AG 2:15 PM · SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW: HAROLD ARLEN
Outstanding documentary about musical genius Harold Arlen, who became resident songwriter for Harlem's famed Cotton Club in the '30s and a composer for stage and screen.

BC 3:30 PM · REFUGEES
Film captures the obstacles faced by African refugees in Israel and highlights the Israelis actively lobbying on their behalf.

AG 4:30 PM · WORDS AND MUSIC BY JERRY HERMAN
Jerry Herman, whose Broadway shows include *Hello, Dolly!*, *Mame* and *La Cage aux Folles*, speaks candidly the successes and failures of his colourful career.

SG 4:30 PM · PAUWELS' CIRCUS
For description, see Wednesday April 22, 3:30 PM

BC 6 PM · BEWOKET: BY THE WILL OF GOD
Dr. Rick Hodes, hired by the Joint Distribution Committee, works in Ethiopia to develop a series of medical clinics.

SG 6:15 PM · EL BRINDIS
For description, see Wednesday April 22, 6:00 PM

AG 7:15 PM · DARLING! THE PIETER-DIRK UYS STORY
Renowned South African satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys employs his unique brand of humour to educate rural students about HIV/AIDS.

BC 8:00 PM · AMERICAN SWING
At the height of the 1970s sexual revolution, Plato's Retreat in New York City gives ordinary people a place to swing.
Warning: Graphic sexual content.

SG 8:45 PM · LEMON TREE
When a Palestinian widow's lemon-tree grove is declared a security risk, she launches a legal battle that goes to the Israeli High Court.

AG 9:30 PM · GRUBER'S JOURNEY
A comic nightmare in which the search for a missing doctor in Romania reveals the horrific truth of what has happened to the local Jews.

BC 10:00 PM · VICTORIA DAY
A group of Russian Toronto kids go to a Bob Dylan concert, and when one boy fails to return home, the community joins in the search.

FRIDAY APRIL 24

AG 10 AM · HALLELUJAH, I'M A BUM
In this Depression-era Rogers & Hart musical, Al Jolson is a cheerful hobo who falls for the mayor's amnesiac mistress.

AG 12:15 PM · KING LATI THE FIRST
An Israeli boy, heir to the throne of his father's Senegalese tribe, journeys to claim his title in this documentary.

BC 1:00 PM · THE BAND WAGON
A washed-up song-and-dance man (Fred Astaire), recruited to star in a Broadway musical, falls for his leading lady (Cyd Charisse).

AG 2:30 PM · MY FLAG
On the eve of Israel's 60th birthday, a filmmaker travels across Israel asking, "What does the Israeli flag mean to you?"

BC 3:30 PM · IT ALL BEGINS AT SEA
In this award-winning film, a young boy is initiated into the mysterious worlds of love, sex and death.

AG 4:30 PM · COMPANY: ORIGINAL CAST ALBUM
D.A. Pennebaker's behind-the-scenes documentary captures the grueling recording session of the music from Stephen Sondheim's Broadway show *Company*.

SATURDAY APRIL 25

BC 7:00 PM · THE MUSIC OF KANDER & EBB: RAZZLE DAZZLE
Documentary celebrates the 35-year collaboration between composer John Kander and Fred Ebb, creators of the music for *Cabaret*, *Chicago* and more.

SG 9:00 PM · VICTORIA DAY
For description, see Thursday April 23, 10:00 PM

BC 9:15 PM · THE DEBT
Three retired Mossad agents, heroes for killing a Nazi war criminal, see their secrets unravel as one of them publishes her memoirs.

AG 9:15 PM · THE CLOWN AND THE FÜHRER
A world-famous clown is asked to perform for Hitler's birthday and sees an opportunity to poke fun at the Führer.

BC 11:30 PM · BART GOT A ROOM
Danny Stein is under pressure to make his prom the greatest night of his life, and advice from his romantically inept divorced dad doesn't help.

SUNDAY APRIL 26

BC 11:00 AM · THE RETURN OF NATHAN BECKER
A Jewish bricklayer returns to Russia after 28 years and finds that the work habits he acquired in America conflict with the Soviet system.

AG 11:00 AM · SWING TIME
A gambler falls for a dance teacher as Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers create magic in their best musical together.

BC 1:00 PM · MAX BAER'S LAST RIGHT HOOK
When Jewish American boxing champ Max Baer comes to Tel Aviv to fight a German opponent, the Jews in 1942 Palestine place their hopes in him.

Presented with the following short film:

WAITING FOR GODIK
The rise and fall of larger-than-life Israeli musical theatre impresario Giora Godik, a prominent icon of the country's happy '60s.

SG 1:00 PM · SHARON
For description, see Thursday April 23, 1:00 PM

AG 2:00 PM · MY FIRST WAR
For description, see Sunday April 19, 3:30 PM

SG 3:00 PM · FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS
For description, see Monday April 20, 3:30 PM

BC 3:45 PM · BROTHERS
After many years apart, two brothers, one a secular Israeli and the other an Orthodox American, discover how different they have become.

AG 4:30 PM · EVERY LITTLE STEP
An exhilarating behind-the-scenes look at the 2006 stage revival of *A Chorus Line* proves that life imitates art.

SG 6:00 PM · ARAB LABOR, PT 2
For description, see Sunday April 19, 1:00 PM

BC 6:30 PM · GREEN DUMPSTER MYSTERY
A filmmaker finds a box of old family photos in a Tel Aviv dumpster, and reconstructs their story from Lodz to Frankfurt, where they nurture hopes for a life in Israel.

► **CLOSING NIGHT FILM**
BC 8:30 PM · WHAT MAKES SAMMY RUN?
Newly restored teleplay of Budd Schulberg's controversial, legendary book about Hollywood, follows the rise of Sammy Glick, a ruthless hustler who climbs his way to the top.

LEGEND

AG = Al Green Theatre
BC = Bloor Cinema
SG = Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Grande Cinemas

TICKET INFORMATION

All box offices open one hour prior to the first screening of each day and close 15 minutes after the last screening begins. Tickets for any screening may be purchased at any of the following box offices:

BLOOR CINEMA
506 Bloor Street West at Bathurst
Bathurst Subway Station

AL GREEN THEATRE, MILES NADAL JCC
750 Spadina Avenue at Bloor
Spadina Subway Station

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Passover Food Ideas

Rabbis share recipes for holiday

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Three Toronto rabbis shared some of their favourite Passover recipes with The CJN. All the dishes are vegetarian, from Sephardi eggs that are noteworthy for their visual appeal, to a vegan main dish and a décadent chocolate mousse cake.

SEPHARDI MARBLED EGGS

Rabbi Cory Weiss of Temple Har Zion uses this recipe for his family's seder. He has adapted it from a number of different methods he has tried. "I put them in a glass bowl, because they're beautiful," he says, referring to the marblized surface of the boiled eggs. "Everybody in my family loves them." He usually makes two dozen; any leftovers are used for egg salad.

18-24 eggs
2-3 sliced onions
onion skins
water
salt and pepper

When you go to the supermarket for onions, collect as many onion skins as you can from the bins of yellow and red onions at the store.

In a large pot, place a layer of onion slices and skins, then a layer of eggs. Add another layer of onion, skins and eggs, and top with more onion skins. Cover with cold water, add some salt and pepper, and turn on the heat to medium-high. Cover the pot.

Boil for 2 to 3 hours. (You can't overcook these, no matter how hard you try!)

After 2 to 3 hours, remove the eggs and gently crack the shells with the back of a spoon. Put them back in the pot and boil another 2 to 3 hours. Add more water as necessary to cover.

Cool the eggs, shell and serve with lemon wedges, salt and pepper.

'EXODUS MEMORIES' RATATOUILLE SERVED OVER QUINOA

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein, director of Kolel: The Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning, and her family are all vegetarians. They suggest this vegan main dish to make vegetarians feel included at the seder. At a dairy seder, they recommend sprinkling it generously with Parmesan cheese just as you bring it to the table. Rabbi Goldstein and her family like to joke that the recipe has many of the foods the Israelites grumbled about, when they remembered "getting it for free" in Egypt!

Chocolate mousse pie as seen in passover by design by Susie Fishbein, ARTSCROLL/ SHAAR PRESS publishers.

1 cup quinoa
2 cups water
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 large leek, chopped
5 tbsp. olive oil
1 large eggplant, trimmed and cut lengthwise into 1/2-inch cubes
1/2 cup tomato sauce, soup stock or water with bouillon
1 large green or yellow zucchini, trimmed and cut lengthwise into 1/2-inch cubes
1 medium yellow or orange bell pepper, stem, seeds and ribs removed, cut in cubes
1/2 lb. fresh cremini or button mushrooms, halved
3 ripe Roma tomatoes, cubed
salt and pepper to taste
the "secret:" 1/2 tsp. of harissa (Sephardi hot sauce), OR 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper, OR 1/2 small chopped jalepeño pepper for added zip!
2 tbsp. minced fresh basil leaves
2 tbsp. minced fresh parsley leaves
1 cup toasted pine nuts or other nut pieces

Continued on page 33

HAPPY AND HEALTHY PASSOVER

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HAPPY AND HEALTHY PASSOVER
The Bielak Family

COR 369

Sweet ending to seder meal

Continued from page 32

Quinoa: Rinse quinoa by running fresh water over the quinoa in a pot. Drain. Put quinoa and 2 cups water in 1-1/2 qt. saucepan; bring to boil. Reduce heat to simmer; cover and cook until all water is absorbed (10 to 15 minutes).

Ratatouille: Heat olive oil until sizzling. Fry the leek. When it has begun to soften and brown, add the minced garlic. Stir until the garlic is cooked but not burned! Add eggplant and sauce or stock and saute for 5 minutes until softened. Add zucchini, pepper, mushrooms and tomatoes until cooked. Add the "secret" and salt and pepper to taste. Place cooked quinoa in a bowl and pile the ratatouille over it. Garnish with minced basil, parsley and nuts. If serving with dairy, sprinkle grated parmesan generously over the top.

Serves four hungry vegetarians as a main meal, or 6 to 8 as a side dish.

APPLE-MATZAH KUGEL

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, senior rabbi of Beth Tzedec Congregation, shared two recipes. The kugel is a favourite side dish at his family seder. It serves 6 to 8 and is easy to double.

4 matzot
3 eggs, beaten
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 cup pareve margarine, melted
1/2 cup sugar
1 tsp cinnamon
1/2 cup ground or chopped nuts (they like almonds)
2 to 3 apples, peeled, and chopped
1/2 cup raisins, if desired

Soak matzot in water to soften. Drain.

Beat eggs, salt, sugar, margarine and cinnamon, add to matzot and beat. Add chopped nuts, apples and raisins, if using.

Place in 8x8-inch square or 8-inch round pan. Drizzle margarine on surface. Bake at 350 for 40 to 50 minutes or until surface is lightly browned.

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE CAKE

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl adapted a Craig Claiborne recipe for this Pesach dessert. He says it is VERY rich.

10 eggs, separated
1 cup sugar
6 oz. semi-sweet chocolate, melted and cooled
1/8 cup melted margarine .
2 cups ground nuts

Preheat oven to 350. Beat yolks and sugar until lemon coloured. Fold in melted chocolate, margarine and nuts.

Retain one-quarter of this mixture on side.

Beat egg whites until they form peaks. Fold into chocolate mixture. Place in a 10-inch springform pan. Bake at 350 for 45 to 60 minutes, until surface bounces back.

After cooling, place remaining chocolate mixture on top. Cool in refrigerator.

Visitors to Aviv matzah factory in Israel enjoy a snack. [Israel Sun photo]

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Passover Food Ideas

Traditional dishes with a fresh twist

By JUDY BART KANCIGOR
Special to The CJN

When Jayne Cohen and her sister returned home for their first Passover after their grandmother had died, they were determined to recreate the holiday dishes they had grown up on. But neither had ever attempted these traditional recipes. They had been Grandma's province.

"We had never thought to copy down her recipes," Cohen lamented. "That first Passover without my grandmother we shared a secret suspicion that allowing her foods to vanish from our table meant losing something much greater and more vital. And we could not bear another loss."

Together the sisters experimented with recipes, using cookbooks for inspiration, questioning and reinterpreting, just as the rabbis through the ages have questioned and reinterpreted the meanings of biblical texts, she said.

"We decided to make foods familiar enough to taste like Passover, yet still be fresh and inventive. Dishes reimagined so that they reflected our changing palates and insatiable culinary curiosity."

Cohen's first project was Grandma's matzah balls. This was especially poignant as she remembered how her little grandma used to whip up an extra batch for her to nibble on while she prepared the Passover plate.

Using the recipe on the matzah meal box as a guide, Cohen played with variations, adding wild onions and herbs.

That Passover experiment led Cohen on a decades-long quest to preserve these timeless family recipes before they disappear, while updating them with new flavour profiles.

The result is Jewish Holiday Cooking: A Food Lover's Classics and Improvisations (Wiley), with nearly 300 classic and contemporary recipes for all the holidays that unite old and new traditions. In each chapter, Cohen provides a history of the holiday as well as touching personal narratives chronicling her own family's experiences and celebrations.

"You walk a fine line trying to make foods familiar enough to taste like Passover, yet still be fresh and innovative," said Cohen by phone from her home in New York. "You don't want to wind up with something very 'chef-y.'

Continued on page 35

Israeli children enjoy a bite of matzah.
[Israel Sun photo]

Passover Food Ideas

Try new ingredients and new techniques

Continued from page 34

"People say, 'How could you touch the sacred?' But when you look at how Jewish food has evolved throughout the ages, as has its ritual, people are constantly using new ingredients and new techniques, which have kept the cuisine vital and the traditions vital. We're all sophisticated these days in terms of taste – heavy food is not appealing to us – we have to keep it fresh and exciting."

Case in point: the iconic chicken soup and matzah balls of her grandmother's day gets a flavour makeover with asparagus and shiitake mushrooms and is served with roasted fennel matzah balls, a dish she calls her "free-wheeling ode to spring."

"Just as they delay until Rosh Hashanah their first tastes of the sweet new autumn fruits, so many Jews wait until Passover to savour the tender new vegetables of spring," she writes.

And for many eastern European Jews, what would the holiday be without brisket? Cohen's Braised Brisket with Thirty-Six Cloves of Garlic takes this traditional dish to another level, both gastronomically and philosophically.

"It's my pun on the classic French chicken with 40 cloves of garlic," she noted. "All that feisty garlic turns sweet and mellow with gentle braising. When pureed, it forms a seductive gravy, which is finished with a zing of chopped raw garlic and lemon zest."

And why 36 and not 40? "According to Jewish tradition, each letter of the alphabet stands for a number," she explained. "The numeric value of the word chai, meaning 'life' in Hebrew, is 18, making it a magical number. We always consider it a number for good luck, and that's why gifts are given in multiples of eighteen. Thirty-six is double chai."

This dish has particular significance for Cohen, because she served it in Paris at the first seder she ever hosted, while visiting her daughter Alex, who was studying there. "We always have first-night seder with my sister and second night with my sister-in-law. While I cook and bring some things, I had never hosted a seder myself."

Alex's friend and boyfriend joined the festivities. "I once read that a guest at a holiday table is a gift for the family, because then the family looks at all the traditions; listens to the songs and the stories, as if for the first time," Cohen writes. "We began the service by blessing the children. But as the seder unfolded, we felt blessed as well."

Judy Bart Kancigor is the author of Cooking Jewish: 532 Great Recipes from the Rabinowitz Family (Workman), www.cookingjewish.com

CHICKEN SOUP WITH ASPARAGUS AND SHIITAKES, SERVED WITH ROASTED FENNEL MATZAH BALLS

Matzah balls

2 small-medium fennel bulbs (about 1 pound, weighed with 2 inches of top stalks)
2 tbsp. olive oil, divided use
1/2 cup chicken broth
1 tbsp. coarsely chopped garlic
salt and freshly ground black pepper
3/4 tsp. chopped fresh thyme, divided use
optional: 1/4 tsp. fennel seeds, ground in a spice grinder or with a mortar and pestle
2 large eggs
about 1/2 cup plus 2 tbsp. matzah meal

Continued on page 36

Students bake matzah at Aviv matzah factory in Israel. [Israel photo]

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Matzah

Seder Plate
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~ or ~
Butternut Squash Nutmeg and Ginger Soup

CHOOSE 1

Farm Fresh Baby Spinach, Oyster Mushroom, Mandarin Orange & Pecan Salad
~ or ~
Moroccan Style Quinoa Salad with Dried Cranberries, Diced Sweet Potatoes & Nuts
~ or ~
Mesclun Greens, Cherry Tomatoes, Hearts Of Palm & Cucumber

CHOOSE 1

Lean Brisket
with Braised Carrots, Sweet Potatoes, Onions, Apricots, Dates & Prunes
~ or ~
Slow Roasted Boneless Turkey Breast with Sautéed Mushrooms, Spinach & Onion Matzo Stuffing
~ or ~
Chicken Breast Supreme with an Apricot Glaze
~ or ~
Baked Salmon with an Olive & Sundried Tomato Tapenade Crust

CHOOSE 2

Grilled Vegetables
Drizzled with Olive Oil & Aged Balsamic

Garlic Infused Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes
with Caramelized Onions

Sweet Potato Mash

Asparagus with Roasted Cherry Tomatoes
Kalamata Olives & Roasted Garlic

Fingerling Potatoes
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Broccoli & Shiitake Mushrooms

Potato Kugel with Caramelized Onions

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Different twist on traditional soup

Continued from page 35

Soup

7 cups homemade chicken broth
1/4 lb. fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems removed and reserved for another use or discarded, caps wiped clean with a damp paper towel and thinly sliced
12 to 15 thin asparagus spears, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces

Preheat oven to 400. Cut off fennel stalks and reserve for another use (excellent for fish broths and stews). If there are some attractive feathery fronds, set aside about 2 tbsp. of them to garnish the soup. Quarter fennel bulbs and trim away the stems, the bottom hard core, and any tough parts.

Choose a shallow baking pan just large enough to fit the fennel in one layer and put in 1 tbsp. of the oil. Add fennel and toss until well coated. Roast fennel until pale gold, about 20 minutes, then turn over and roast 10 minutes longer. Stir in broth, garlic, salt and pepper to taste, and 1/2 tsp. of the thyme. Cover pan with foil and cook 35 to 45 minutes longer, or until fennel is very soft.

Remove foil, stir, and roast for a few more minutes to evaporate most of liquid. Transfer fennel and garlic to a food processor and chop coarsely. Add remaining 1/4 tsp. of thyme, salt (it will need about 1 teaspoon), pepper to taste, and fennel seeds, if using. With the machine on, add the remaining 1 tablespoon oil through the feed tube.

Scrape mixture into large bowl. You need 1 cup of purée, so

nosh on any extra. Whisk in eggs, one at a time. Add matzah meal and stir well. If you can form a lump into a very soft walnut-size ball (the batter will become firmer when you chill it), don't add any more matzah meal. If necessary, add just enough matzah meal to enable you to do so. Refrigerate for at least 2 or up to 4 hours so the matzah meal can drink in the liquid and seasoning.

When ready to cook, bring 4 quarts water and 1 tablespoon of salt to a rapid boil in a large, wide pot with a lid. Dipping your hands into cold water if needed, roll batter into walnut-size balls. When all the balls are rolled and the water is boiling furiously, turn the heat down to a gentle boil. Carefully slide in the balls one at a time and cover the pot tightly.

Turn heat down to a simmer, and cook over low heat for 30 minutes, without removing the cover. (They will cook by direct heat as well as by steam, which makes them puff and swell, and lifting the lid will allow some of that steam to escape.) Take out a dumpling and cut it in half. It should be light, fluffy and completely cooked through. If it isn't, continue cooking a few more minutes.

Remove the balls gently with a skimmer or large slotted spoon – they are too fragile to pour into a colander.

When the matzah balls are almost ready, start the soup: Bring the broth to a simmer in a large pot.

Add the matzah balls, mushrooms and asparagus and simmer for about 5 minutes, until the vegetables are tender. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the matzah balls to shallow soup bowls and ladle the hot soup and the vegetables over them. Garnish with the reserved chopped fennel fronds.

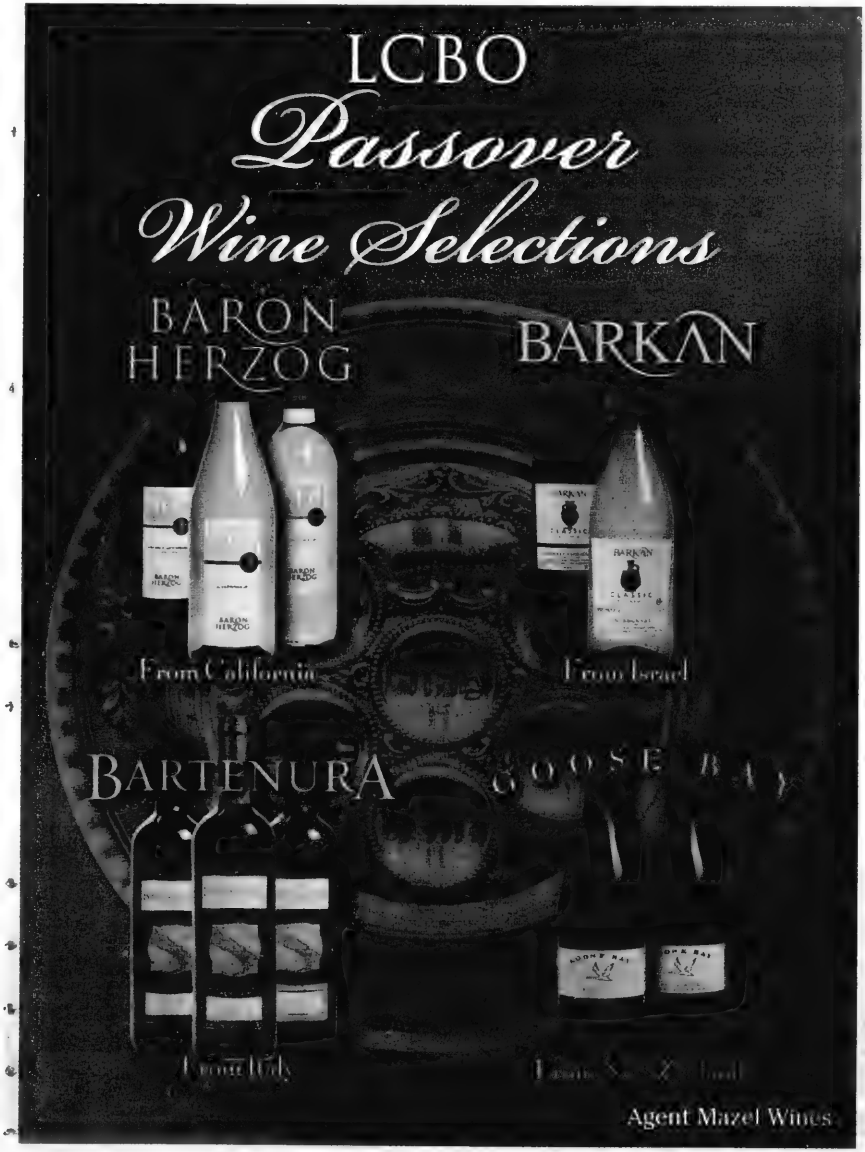
Notes: You can cook the matzah balls up to 2 to 3 hours in advance. Drain them and cover with some broth to keep them moist before setting them aside until you are ready to reheat them. Experiment making matzah balls with a purée of other vegetables, such as beets, carrots, leeks, mushrooms or shallots. Roasted vegetables absorb less moisture than boiled or steamed ones (and therefore require less matzah meal, making them lighter). They are also more flavourful. Makes about 8 servings.

Source: Jewish Holiday Cooking by Jayne Cohen

BRAISED BRISKET WITH THIRTY-SIX CLOVES OF GARLIC

About 36 fat, unpeeled garlic cloves (1 2/3 to 2 cups) or an equivalent amount of smaller cloves, plus 1 tsp. minced garlic
3 tbsp. olive oil
first- or second-cut beef brisket (about 5 lb.), trimmed of excess fat, wiped with a damp paper towel, and patted dry
2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
3 cups chicken broth, preferably homemade, or good-quality low-sodium purchased
3 or 4 fresh thyme sprigs, or 2 tsp. dried leaves
2 fresh rosemary sprigs, plus 1 tsp. chopped leaves
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tsp. grated lemon zest

Continued on page 38



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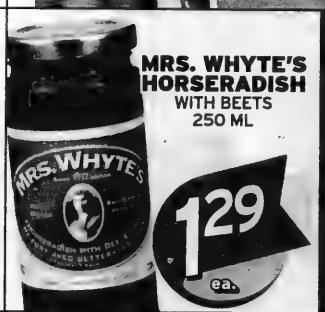

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How do you make matzah brei?

By DEBORAH DAVIS
Special to The CJN

There is an old saying, "Two Jews, three opinions." Every family has its own way of making matzah brei. Is it salty or sweet? Mushy or crunchy? Do you use small pieces or large? Do you fry it in butter or oil? More like French toast or more like an omelet?

If you prefer your french toast or omelets cooked in butter rather than oil, then you will probably prefer your matzah brei cooked in butter. There are also different types of matzah to choose from: the traditional, hand-made, shmura matzah, or the machine-made flavours – plain, whole-wheat, organic, egg, onion, garlic, poppyseed, chocolate, fruit juice and other varieties. (Note that not all of these varieties are kosher for Passover.) Some people bake their own matzah. In the 1920s, in Europe, matzah was delivered to homes in a horse and buggy in round, blue boxes shaped like hat boxes.

Some Jews do not eat matzah brei, or any other matzah that has come in contact with water, until the last day of Passover. There is a concern that if matzah comes in contact with water, it might rise.

But when you do have it, try out each of these recipes and see which matzah brei suits your home.

Each recipe serves two. They can be doubled, tripled, etc., to meet your family's needs.

Continued on page 40

This Passover, ask a 5th question:

COMPLETE SEDER DINNER INCLUDES:

Seder plate
Matzo
Old fashioned dill pickles
Tzimmes with fresh prunes, yams & carrots
Gefilte fish made with white fish & salmon

CHOOSE ONE
Cabbage borscht with tender beef flunken
OR
Homemade matzo ball soup

CHOOSE ONE
Farm fresh baby spinach salad with red onions, toasted almonds, mandarin oranges, topped with a citrus vinaigrette
OR
Traditional coleslaw

CHOOSE TWO
Brisket served with gravy au jus
OR
Pickle Barrel famous B.B.Q. chicken
OR
Baked salmon with an orange miso glaze
OR
Grilled salmon with a sweet teriyaki glaze

CHOOSE ONE
Garlic infused mashed potatoes with caramelized onions
OR
Farfel with sautéed button & shiitake mushrooms
OR
Roasted mini red potatoes with fresh herbs & Kosher salt

CHOOSE ONE
Green beans with caramelized onions & toasted almonds
OR
Candied roasted root vegetables topped with crushed toasted pecans

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The PICKLE BARREL

The best of brisket

Continued from page 36

Preheat oven to 325. Drop garlic cloves into small saucepan of boiling water; leave in water 30 seconds. Drain immediately. Peel as soon as garlic is cool enough to handle. Set aside on paper towels to dry.

Heat olive oil over medium-high heat in heavy-bottomed roasting pan or flameproof casserole large enough to accommodate meat in one layer. Use two burners, if necessary. Add brisket and brown well on both sides, about 10 minutes. Transfer brisket to platter and set aside. (Or brown meat under the broiler: Place brisket, fat side up, on a foil-lined broiler pan under a preheated broiler. Broil for 5 to 6 minutes on each side, until browned. Don't allow it to develop a hard, dark crust, which might make the meat tough or bitter. Move the meat around as necessary, so it sears evenly.)

Pour off all but about 1 tablespoon of fat remaining in pan and add the garlic cloves. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the garlic edges are tinged with gold. Add the vinegar and deglaze the pan, scraping up all the browned bits from the bottom with a wooden spoon. Add stock, thyme and rosemary sprigs, and reduce heat to a simmer. Salt and pepper brisket to taste on all sides, and add it to the pan, fat side up. Spoon garlic cloves over meat.

Place brisket in oven, cover (if you have no lid, use heavy-duty foil), and cook, basting every half-hour, until the meat is fork tender, 2-1/2 to 3 hours or longer. (As the meat cooks, periodically check that the liquid is bubbling gently.

If it is boiling rapidly, turn the oven down to 300 degrees. The brisket tastes best if it is allowed to rest, reabsorbing the juices lost during braising, and it's easiest to de-fat the gravy if you prepare the meat ahead and refrigerate it until the fat solidifies. That is the method I use (given here), but the gravy can be prepared by skimming the fat in the traditional way, if you prefer. If you go that route though, do let the meat rest in the pan sauce for at least an hour.

Cool the brisket in the pan sauce, cover well with foil, and refrigerate until the fat congeals. Scrape off all solid fat. Remove the brisket from the pan and slice thinly across the grain.

Prepare gravy: Bring braising mixture to room temperature, then strain it, reserving the garlic and discarding the thyme and rosemary sprigs. Skim and discard as much fat as possible from the liquid. Purée about half of the cooked garlic with 1 cup of the de-fatted braising liquid in a food processor or a blender. (If you want a smooth gravy, purée all of the cooked garlic cloves.)

Transfer the puréed mixture, the remaining braising liquid, and the rest of the cooked garlic to a skillet. Add the chopped rosemary, minced garlic, and lemon zest. Boil down the gravy over high heat, uncovered, to desired consistency. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Rewarm the brisket in the gravy until heated through.

Arrange sliced brisket on a serving platter. Spoon some of the hot gravy all over the meat and pass the rest in a separate sauceboat. Yield: 8 generous servings.

Source: Jewish Holiday Cooking by Jayne Cohen

food Basics

PASSOVER 2009/5769

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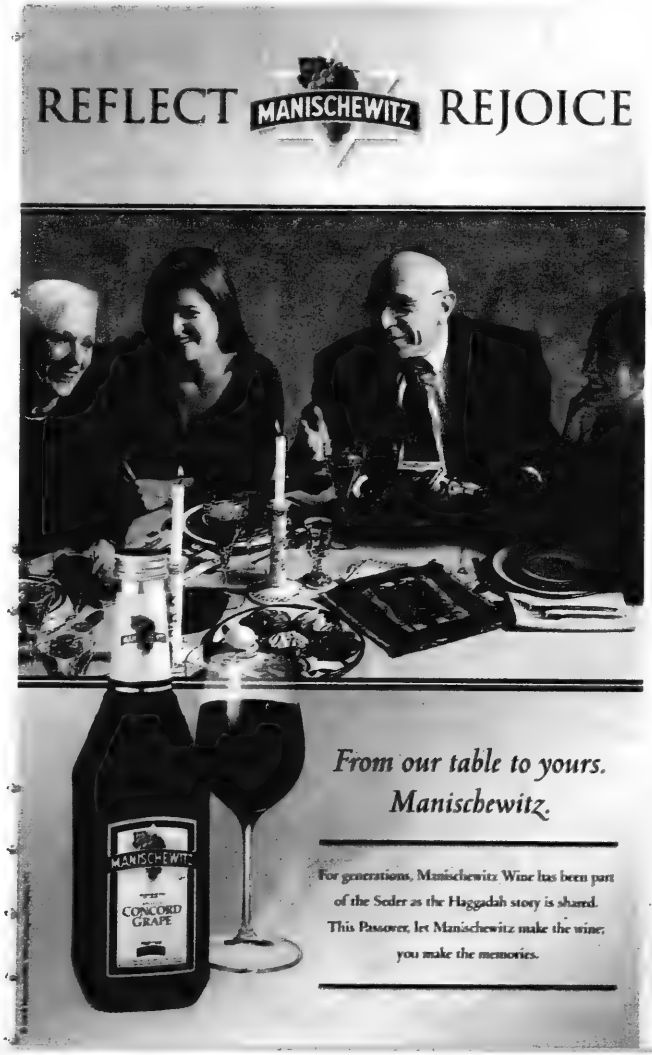
Pesach recipe substitutes

At some point during Pesach preparations, we've all tried to convert a mainstream recipe for Pesach, only to discover that we don't know what to substitute for a chametz ingredient. To help with this panic moment, here is a list of Passover substitutes. There are some new ones this year.

- 1 oz. baking chocolate (unsweetened chocolate) = 3 tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder plus 1 tbsp. oil or melted margarine
- 16 oz. semi-sweet chocolate = 6 tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder plus 1/4 cup oil and 7 tbsp. granulated sugar
- 14 oz. sweet chocolate (German-type) = 3 tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder plus 2-2/3 tbsp. oil and 4-1/2 tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar = 1 cup granulated sugar minus 1 tbsp. sugar plus 1 tbsp. potato starch pulsed in a food processor or blender
- 1 cup sour milk or buttermilk for baking = 1 tbsp. lemon juice in a 1 cup measure, then fill to 1 cup with Passover nondairy creamer. Stir and steep 5 minutes
- butter in baking or cooking – use pareve Passover margarine in equal amounts and a bit less salt
- 1 cup honey = 1-1/4 cups granulated sugar plus 1/4 cup water
- 1 cup corn syrup = 1-1/4 cups granulated sugar plus 1/3 cup water, boiled until syrupy
- 1 cup vanilla sugar = 1 cup granulated sugar with 1 split vanilla bean left for at least 24 hours in a tightly covered jar
- 1 cup flour – substitute 5/8 cup matzah cake meal or potato starch, or a combination sifted together
- 1 tbsp. flour = 1/2 tbsp. potato starch
- 1 cup corn starch = 7/8 cup potato starch
- 1 tsp. cream of tartar = 1-1/2 tsp. lemon juice or 1-1/2 tsp. vinegar
- 1 cup graham cracker crumbs = 1 cup ground cookies or soup nuts plus 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 cup bread crumbs = 1 cup matzah meal
- 1 cup matzah meal = 3 matzahs ground in a food processor
- 1 cup matzah cake meal = 1 cup plus 2 tbsp. matzah meal finely ground in a blender or food processor and sifted
- 3 crumbled matzahs = 2 cups matzah farfel
- 1 cup (8 oz.) cream cheese = 1 cup cottage cheese pureed with 1/2 stick butter or margarine
- chicken fat or gribenes = 2 caramelized onions: sauté 2 sliced onions in 2 tbsp. oil and 2 tbsp. sugar. Cook until the onions are soft. Puree the onions once they are golden.
- 1 cup milk (for baking) = 1 cup water plus 2 tbsp. margarine, or 1/2 cup fruit juice plus 1/2 cup water
- 1-1/4 cup sweetened condensed milk =1 cup instant nonfat dry milk, 2/3 cup sugar, 1/3 cup boiling water and 3 tablespoons margarine. Blend all the ingredients until smooth. To thicken, let set in the refrigerator for 24 hours.
- 1 cup wine = 13 tbsp. water, 3 tbsp. lemon juice and 1 tbsp. sugar. Mix together and let set for 10 minutes.
- for frying: instead of chicken fat, use combination of olive oil or vegetable oil and 1 to 2 tbsp. pareve Passover margarine.

Continued on page 42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Matzah brei: sweet and salty

Continued from page 38

FRENCH TOAST-STYLE MATZAH BREI: SWEET AND SALTY

Provided by Brett Goldberg

4 sheets matzah
water
4 eggs
2 tbsp. pancake syrup
4 drops vanilla
1/4 tsp. kosher salt
4 tbsp. butter or oil for frying

Break the matzah into different size pieces in a large bowl. Boil enough water to just cover the matzah in the bowl. (The amount of water will depend on the size of the bowl and the amount of matzah.)

Pour the water over the matzah. After 15-20 seconds, strain as much water as possible without crushing the matzah. Set aside.

In a separate bowl, beat the eggs. Add the syrup, vanilla and kosher salt. Pour this liquid mixture over the strained matzah. Gently mix and fold in.

Fry over medium-high heat in butter or oil, depending on preference. Keep stirring so that it remains in pieces. Fry until golden brown, glistening and slightly wet. Serve with maple syrup. Sprinkle a little kosher salt.

Variations:

- break the matzah into tiny pieces, large pieces, or use the whole sheet of matzah.
- use milk instead of water
- skip the maple syrup
- skip the vanilla
- skip the salt
- use Celtic salt
- add sugar and/or cinnamon to the mixture
- sprinkle with sugar and/or cinnamon
- serve with honey or another sugary syrup
- serve with jelly or jam

OMELET-STYLE MATZAH BREI

2 sheets of matzah
water
4 eggs
1/2 onion
salt and pepper to taste
4 tbsp. butter or oil for frying

Grate the onion. Set aside. Break the matzah into tiny pieces in a large bowl. Boil enough water to just cover the matzah in the bowl. (The amount of water will depend on the size of the bowl, and the amount of matzah.) Leave it soaking in the bowl for a few minutes. Drain the matzah.

Add the onion, egg, salt and pepper. Mix. Fry over medium-high heat in butter or oil, depending on preference. Cook until egg is solid (like an omelet). Serve with sour cream.

Variations:

- use milk instead of water
- use other favourite omelet ingredients: green chile, bell pepper, mushroom, cheese, etc.
- serve with applesauce, ketchup, maple syrup, or jelly.

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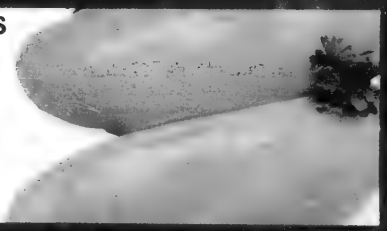

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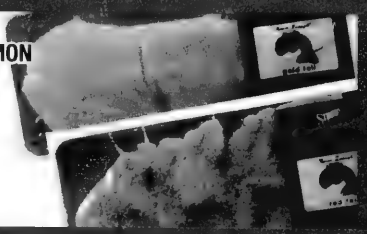

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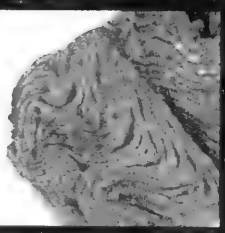

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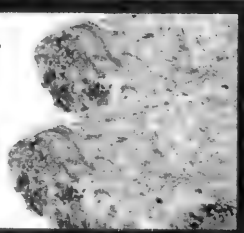

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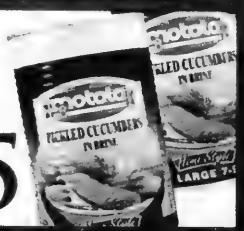

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After the pre-Passover 'plagues'…

By DOROTHY LIPOVENKO
Special to The CJN

In silent awe, the shoppers gaze skyward at the towering display of matzah. It never fails to impress, this feat of engineering. (Has anyone ever seen how supermarkets do it?) And it seems to grow higher each year, with new varieties like organic and spelt.

"Can you believe these prices?" someone grumbles. No, but compared to what?

A *yiddene*, trying to avert a rude brush with the law of physics, asks me to reach for a box on high. Happily I oblige, while stifling the urge to give the Leaning Tower of Manischewitz a good poke and bring it all tumbling down. Ah, perchance to dream on a bed of egg, tea and whole wheat matzah, and sleep – till the holiday is over.

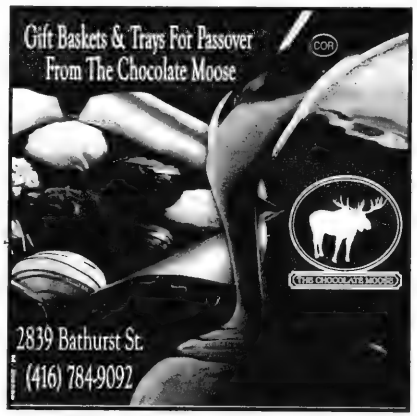
Actually, Pesach is my favourite holiday; it's the getting there that hurts. But after collapsing head-first into my seder plate for a snooze, I'm refreshed and ready to enjoy. After all, matzah is the only food group equally at home as stuffing for turkey or a blanket for chocolate.

But right now, who can fantasize about recipes when you're the walking wounded?

So, in the spirit of the Haggadah's plagues, I offer the 10 "*makkot*" (plagues) of cleaning the house for Passover.

- Broken/chipped fingernails: On an injury scale of one to 10 – zip. They'll grow back. Or, bite them off and bypass breakage altogether.
- Head bumps: Gives new meaning to the Yiddish expression "*shlog der kop in vant arayn*" ("bang your head against the wall"). Cupboard doors that are well-behaved all year magically open when you're not looking, just for spite.
- Weight gain: Rewards must be a perk of the job in this marathon cleanup – think bags of Pesach coconut-covered marshmallows.
- Malnutrition: Don't confuse with weight loss. Caused by a dwindling food supply and a designated cleaner too tired to cook a nutritious dinner. Upside? Eating hot dogs and other quick and dirty stuff otherwise shunned during the year.
- Falling: This is no joke, and all I can say is, get it over with early (preferably before Purim) so you can jump back on that stepladder without losing your nerve.
- Bruising: What happens when you fall. Cellulite on your thighs getting you down? Wait till you see cellulite splattered with borscht-coloured bruises.
- Cuts: A consequence of "haste makes waste." Bandaging a severe gash on my thumb, my husband, who works in a hospital, is reassuring until I hear the words "possible nerve damage." Thank you, Dr. Kildare.

Continued on page 43



Substitutes work well

Continued from page 40

- eggs: Passover egg substitutes don't work quite as well as the chametz egg substitutes. For kugels, matzah balls, fried matzah and some cakes, the recipes will probably be ok. However, if you want to avoid them, you can add one extra egg white and 1/2 tsp. of vegetable oil for each yolk eliminated when baking. Use only egg whites as the dipping to coat and fry meats.
- Italian seasoning = 1/4 tsp. each dried oregano leaves, dried marjoram leaves and dried basil leaves plus 1/8 tsp. rubbed dried sage. This can be substituted for 1-1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning.
- curry powder = 2 tbsp. ground coriander, 1 tbsp. black pepper, 2 tbsp. red pepper, 2 tbsp. turmeric, 2 tbsp. ground ginger. Makes 2/3 cup.
- pancake syrup – use fruit jelly, not jam, and add a little water to thin. I always like to combine the jelly and water in a microwave safe bowl and heat it gently before I serve it.
- seasoned rice wine vinegar = 3 tbsp. white vinegar, 1 tbsp. white wine, 1 tbsp. sugar, 1/2 tsp. salt. Mix to combine. Makes 1/4 cup
- flavoured vinegar = lemon juice in cooking or salad, grapefruit juice in salads, wine in marinades.
- water chestnuts – substitute raw jicama
- orange liqueur – substitute an equal amount of frozen orange juice concentrate
- You can mince the tops of green onions and use them in recipes that call for chives or use celery tops instead of parsley (who are we kidding, we always have parsley during Pesach)

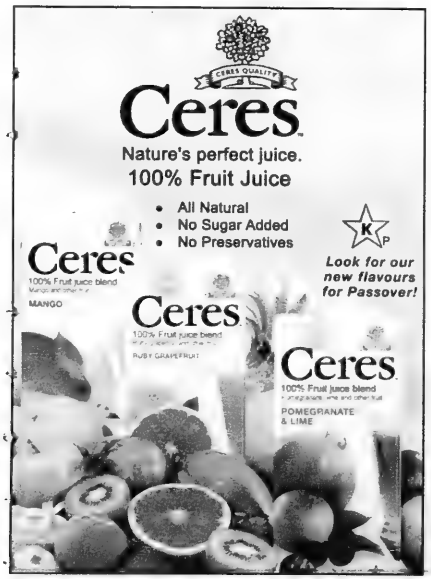
Soy sauce substitute

This soy sauce substitute doesn't taste exactly like the real thing, but it makes a flavourful alternative for Pesach stir fry.

2 tbsp. beef broth
1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 tsp. balsamic vinegar
1 tbsp. brown sugar
1 tsp. oil
1/8 tsp. garlic powder
black pepper to taste
1/4 cup boiling water

Combine all the ingredients. At this point, you can either use the sauce as is, leaving for an hour to give the flavours a chance to blend; or, for a thicker, richer sauce, boil the liquid until it is reduced by half, to about 3 tbsp. Store in a sealed container in the refrigerator. Makes 2/3 cup. Use the sauce within 3 or 4 days.

If anyone has any other substitutions they would like to share please let Eileen Goltz know at ztlog@verizon.net.



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Fruits are even sweeter when combined

By EILEEN GOLTZ
Special to The CJN

I've always said that compote is sort of like a cholent but with fruit. While the description might have some merit, I know I have to modify the statement a little, since the following compote recipes are a tad more elegant than cholent and a whole lot sweeter.

For those who've never heard of or tasted this homemade treat, compote is a sweetened, usually cooked combination of fruit (fresh and/or dried), served with the syrup it's cooked in. Compotes are typically seasoned with spices like cinnamon or nutmeg and can be served at breakfast, lunch or dinner.

These recipes for compote plus the ones that are for elegant, cooked fruit desserts are all perfect for Pesach, most are pareve and can be served year round.

Oh, before we get to the recipes, I should mention that the biggest benefit to serving compote is that it's been known to counteract the – how shall I say this? – "binding effect" that matzah has on many a digestive tract. Happy eating.

BAKED FRUIT COMPOTE

1 can apricot halves, drained
1 can pear halves, drained
1 can whole plums, drained, halved and pitted
1 can peach halves, drained
1 can pineapple slices, undrained
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
1 tbsp. butter or margarine
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp. ground cloves

Preheat oven to 350. In a greased 9x13-in. baking pan, starting at the 9-in. end, arrange rows of fruit in the following order: half of the apricots, pears and plums, all of the peaches, then remaining apricots, pears and plums. Drain pineapple, reserving 1/2 cup of juice. Lay pineapple over fruit in pan. In a saucepan, combine the pineapple juice, brown sugar, butter, cinnamon and cloves. Cook and stir until sugar is dissolved and butter is melted. Pour the liquid mixture over the fruit. Bake, uncovered, for 20 to 25 minutes or until heated through. Serves 12 to 14.

SIMPLE APPLESAUCE COMPOTE

1/2 cup applesauce
1 1/2 cups fresh cranberries
1/2 cup sweet red wine
1/2 cup apple juice
1/3 cup sugar
1 1-in. slice lemon rind strip
4 cups sliced peeled Golden delicious apple
2 cups firm-Anjou pears, cored and cut into 1/4-inch thick wedges (about 3/4 pound)

Preheat oven to 400 and grease a 9x13-in. baking pan. Spoon applesauce onto several layers of heavy-duty paper towels lining a colander. Cover with additional paper towels; let stand 5 minutes. Scrape the applesauce into a bowl. In a saucepan, combine the cranberries, wine, juice, sugar and rind and bring the mixture to a simmer, stirring occasionally.

Remove the liquid from heat; stir in the applesauce. Combine the apple and pears and put them in the prepared pan. Pour the cranberry mixture over the top of the apple mixture. Cover and bake for 25 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 10 minutes or until fruit is tender, basting occasionally with liquid from dish. Remove the rind. Serves 8 to 10.

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Cook by instinct and taste

Continued from page 42

• Sleeplessness: The bigger the head start on cleaning, the more likely you're fretting at 2 a.m. that two weeks is insufficient to do one kitchen.
• Nightmares: For when you finally fall asleep, with two recurring themes: 1) The doorbell rings, seder guests arrive but the Pesach dishes are still in the basement. 2) The doorbell rings and two tons of matzah are delivered to your door because you forgot to close out a matzah futures contract. On waking, you realize there's no such thing as matzah futures but think it would make a fun addition to commodities trading.
• Electric shock. What happened to a newlywed who used steel wool (instead of common sense) on a stove's electrical outlet – 32 years later, I can still conjure the feeling of being zapped. Hint: always use a sponge.

* * *

I'm not real big on recipes during the year, so why should Pesach be any different? Feel and instinct are my guides in the kitchen. But I am fond of Pesach grub, so here are some suggestions for what makes it extra *batampt* (flavourful), chez nous.

• Toss six pitted prunes or a handful of raisins into a pot of tomato-cabbage borscht as it cooks. Fresh dill clinches it.
• Don't throw out that bag of radishes from the seders. Grate them, add a chopped English cucumber, a dash of salt, a good pinch of black pepper, a teaspoon of oil and fresh lemon juice.
• The Mashed Potato was a dance step in the rockin' '60s. Here's my Pesach version: mash 3-4 cooked red or Yukon gold potatoes while warm; saute a small diced onion and a box of small brown (or 2-3 large Portabello) mushrooms, sliced or chopped, in a little water with a half teaspoon of paprika. To the potatoes add salt and pepper to taste (an extra shake of paprika doesn't hurt), chill slightly, then shape into big patties and brown in a pan shpritzed with Pesach cooking oil spray. A simple dish taken to the next level.
• Add half of a tin of kosher for Passover jellied cranberries to a pot of meatballs for stewing. Use more or less cranberries depending on the number of meatballs.
• Pesach salads aren't the same since the wonderful, eggy-rich Mother's brand mayonnaise disappeared. Now, I just buy a tub or two of Pesach coleslaw, toss with steamed carrots and cauliflower, adding leftover roast veal. Good for lunch.
• Grate – don't cut – fixings like zucchini, carrots and potatoes into a vegetable soup that starts with a packaged base. If you are so inclined, add fresh dill or Italian parsley.

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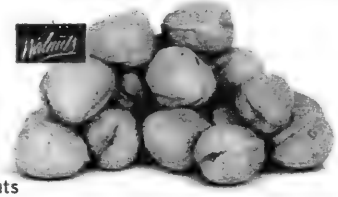

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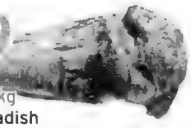

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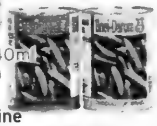

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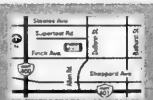
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Sudan has become playground for terror groups

By ZVI BAR'EL
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Analysis

Did the recent truck convoys making their way from Port Sudan to Egypt carry weapons from Iran, China or Russia – Sudan's three major arms suppliers? The prime suspect is Iran, which has been strengthening its ties with Sudan ever since President Omar Hassan al-Bashir took power in a military coup in 1989.

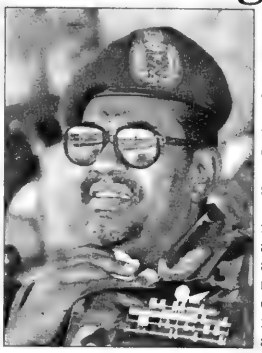
Iranian Defence Minister Mustafa Muhammad Najar visited Sudan last month and signed a series of military cooperation agreements. Among other things, Iran's army will now train Sudanese military cadets and Iran will provide Sudan with advanced weapons. In 2006, al-Bashir visited Iran, declared the friendship between the two states strong and said Sudan's army was "willing to put itself at the disposal of Iranian instructors."

Arab sources report that Sudan allows Hezbollah to operate in its territory, including by purchasing arms both for the organization's own use and for Hamas. Since some areas of Sudan are not under the central government's control, international terror organizations see it as a convenient playground.

Sudan is one of the poorest countries in the world, with an average per capita income of about $200. Its legal system is based on Islamic religious law. However, it maintains relatively good ties with the American intelligence community. Sudan hosted terrorist Osama Bin Laden for years, until he left it in 1996 for Afghanistan. But after the Sept. 11 attacks, Khartoum offered to co-operate with the United States and allowed CIA agents to operate in its territory.

In exchange, then-president George W. Bush lifted many of the sanctions that had been imposed on Sudan and praised the intelligence co-operation with Khartoum. Some of the sanctions were reimposed in 2004, following the outbreak of the war in Darfur. But the United States is maintaining its diplomatic ties with Sudan to preserve the reconciliation agreement between north and south, for which Sudan won U.S. assistance worth $360 million.

In 1995, after an assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak while he was visiting Addis Ababa, Mubarak accused Sudan of responsibility for the attack and urged the Sudanese people to topple the regime. Egypt also gave asylum to former Sudanese president Jaffer Numeiri until al-Bashir permitted his return.


Omar al-Bashir

Egypt is nevertheless careful to maintain correct relations with Sudan, to ensure that it does not damage the Nile, Egypt's life source, and that the peace agreement between northern and southern Sudan does not damage Egypt's interests. Yet Cairo is also watching the increasingly close relationship between Iran and Sudan with alarm, seeing it as a threat.

The International Criminal Court recently issued a warrant for al-Bashir's arrest on charges of planning and committing genocide. Al-Bashir has thus far scoffed at the warrant, and this week, he visited Mubarak to seek Arab backing against it. Egyptian sources said he also consulted Mubarak about the strike on the arms convoys and sought his help to improve Sudan's relations with Washington.

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Remembering the Past, Shaping the Future

Israel disputes number of civilian deaths in Gaza

JTA

JERUSALEM — Some 25 per cent of Palestinians killed in Operation Cast Lead were civilians, the Israel Defence Forces said.

The research department of Israel Defence Intelligence identified 1,166 Palestinians killed during Israel's three-week military operation in Gaza in December and January. Of them, 709 were identified as operatives of Hamas or other terrorist groups and 295 were identified as "uninvolved Palestinians." The IDF said another 162 had not yet been conclusively identified one way or the other. Of the "uninvolved Palestinians" killed, 89 were under the age of 16 and 49 were women.

The figures were gathered following the examination of various intelligence sources and were cross-referenced, the IDF said

Palestinian officials claim that 1,417 people were killed, including more than 900 civilians.

"The IDF wishes to emphasize that its objective during Operation Cast Lead was to target the Hamas terror organization and not the citizens of the Gaza Strip," the IDF spokesman's office said. "It must be stressed that the fighting took place in a complex battlefield, defined by the Hamas terror organization itself. The Hamas terror organization placed the primary fighting scene at the heart of civilian neighborhoods as it booby-trapped homes, fired from schools, and used civilians as human shields."

Efforts to identify the remaining dead are continuing.

The fatality list presented by the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza has numerous inaccuracies and contradictions, the IDF says. For example, Tawfiq Ja'abari, the commander of the Hamas police, and Mohammed Shakshak, a personal assistant to the head of Hamas' military wing, Ahmed Ja'abari, are both described as dead children on the Palestinian list

IDF calls off investigation

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JERUSALEM — Military Advocate General Brig.-Gen. Avichai Mendelblit on Monday instructed the military police investigation unit to close the investigation into soldiers' accounts of alleged misconduct and serious violations of the army's rules of engagement during its operation in Gaza.

In a press release issued Monday, the army said that the preliminary military police investigation into the testimonies revealed that they "were based on rumours, and not first-hand experience."

The probe was launched late last month after Israeli soldiers were quoted as telling a military cadet academy that combat troops in Gaza fired at unarmed Palestinian civilians and vandalized property during Operation Cast Lead. The army has barred those soldiers from speaking to the press.

The testimonies include a description by an infantry squad leader of an incident in which an Israel Defence Forces sharpshooter mistakenly shot a Palestinian mother and her two children.

Another squad leader from the same brigade told of an incident in which the company commander ordered that an elderly Palestinian woman be shot and killed. She was said to be walking on a road about 100 metres from a house that the company had commandeered.

News reports that surfaced after the alleged actions of IDF soldiers in Gaza were first publicized suggested the allegations were based on second-hand, not eyewitness, accounts.

How to attract Birthright alumni?

By SUE FISHKOFF
JTA

SAN FRANCISCO — Nearly 160,000 young people from North America have taken part in Taglit-Birthright Israel, a 10-day free Israel trip aimed at revving up their Jewish identity.

Of those no longer in college, only half have attended any Jewish event since their return. Toronto has had the greatest success at keeping this population somewhat engaged, with 63 per cent of returnees participating in at least one Jewish event.

That's one of the findings of Tourists, Travelers and Citizens, a new report by the Cohen Center of Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University. The report is based on interviews with and online surveys of 1,534 Birthright alumni in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Toronto, the four largest Jewish communities in North America.

Report co-author Fern Chertok attributes Toronto's success to the city's Jewish community, which keeps Birthright returnees apprised of a well-planned schedule of Jewish programs.

But other North American cities aren't enjoying the same results.

The Birthright program was instituted in 2000 by philanthropists concerned about what they perceived as the younger generation's lack of Jewish involvement. Numerous formal and informal evaluations show participants' connection to Israel and the Jewish community are enhanced by their trip, but that does not translate into ongoing Jewish involvement, according to the new report.

In New York, where 43 per cent of returnees have not attended any Jewish program since their Israel trip, researchers found an array of Jewish offerings but little effort to let Birthright alumni know about them. Asked whether they had even heard of a dozen Jewish organizations offering programs for their age, 67 per cent said they knew of the JCC Manhattan and the 92nd Street and 14th Street Y's, but just 20 per cent had attended events there. Other Jewish programs showed even less participation and were less well known.

Los Angeles showed the greatest number of completely disengaged alumni, with 53per cent saying they had attended no Jewish programs since Israel. San Francisco had higher numbers taking part in one to four activities – 43 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively.

Both California cities are hampered by a lack of good programs, the report's authors say. Those that exist are high profile and do draw crowds.

The alumni surveyed in all four cities said they would like to be more involved in Jewish life. Most preferred small gatherings to large, anonymous "meat market" Jewish events.

Respondents also said they were interested in learning more about Judaism and Jewish culture and history, including Hebrew, but were wary of outreach groups with a perceived "religious" agenda. They also wanted a network of friends to share those experiences to re-create the camaraderie they felt on their Israel trips.

"Birthright shows people that being part of a group, a Jewish group, is a meaningful experience," report co-author Leonard Saxe says, but "most communities don't provide them with a set of those experiences."

Birthright NEXT, an organization that tries to steer alumni toward greater Jewish involvement in their communities and has chapters in New York and San Francisco, is taking those tips to heart, its executive director, Daniel Brenner, says.

Last fall, the organization launched NEXT Shabbat, which encourages alumni to host Shabbat meals in their homes. It's a peer-driven project, Brenner says: invitees RSVP online, Birthright NEXT provides resources and recipes on its website, and it picks up the tab after hosts submit feedback.

Government has 30 cabinet ministers

Continued from page 1

Just before Netanyahu spoke, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert gave his final address to the Knesset, praising Begin for "demonstrating courage in making the fateful decision for peace."

Netanyahu began naming ministers for his incoming government on Monday – a lineup so long that Knesset officials have requested a larger table for cabinet meetings.

The new coalition will have 30 ministers and seven deputy ministers. Netanyahu officially informed acting-Knesset Speaker Michael Eitan on Monday that he had succeeded in assembling the cabinet and was prepared to swear in the new ministers on Tuesday.

Netanyahu held a series of consecutive talks with prospective ministers throughout the day on Monday.

He was expected to take the finance portfolio himself and to appoint Yuval Steinitz as minister under him.

Other Likud officials to join the cabinet include Ya'akov Ne'eman (justice) Gideon Sa'ar (education), Yisrael Katz (transportation), Moshe Ya'alon (strategic affairs), Gilad Erdan (environmental protection), Limor Livnat (sports and culture) and Yuli Edelstein (likely to take media and telecommunications).

Silvan Shalom had reportedly sought the position of finance minister, among other things, saying he would prefer no ministerial post at all if he was not given a senior position.

It is believed Netanyahu intends to appoint Shalom as his deputy prime minister and minister for regional development, or minister for economic peace and deputy prime minister.

Yisrael Beiteinu leader Avigdor Lieberman will be given the position of foreign minister, after Attorney General Menachem Mazuz ruled on Monday that there was no legal reason to bar him from the post. Yisrael Beiteinu will take four additional portfolios in the new government, including public security (Yitzhak Aharonovitch), infrastructure (Uzi Landau), tourism (Stav Miznikov) and absorption and immigration (Sofa Landover).

Labor party chair Ehud Barak will retain his position as defence minister. Avishay Braverman receives Labor's fifth ministerial post as minister without portfolio with responsibility for minorities. Braverman, who was one of the seven Laborites who opposed Barak's move to join the coalition, said after accepting Barak's offer that he was at peace with his decision.

Labour minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer will take on the trade, labour and industry portfolio, Shalom Simhon will serve as agriculture minister, and Labor's No. 2 Isaac Herzog will head the welfare ministry.

Senior Likudniks are reportedly angry that Netanyahu gave so many senior portfolios to his coalition partners and for making them wait until the last minute.

A Netanyahu associate said, however, that "clearly there will be disappointments, but that is the price of a broad, strong, balanced coalition."

The senior coalition partner has only five portfolios: finance, transportation, communications, environmental protection, and culture and sports.

To these, Netanyahu was to add a deputy prime minister and minister for strategic affairs, and to split the Communications Ministry to create a Regional Development Ministry and a Ministry for Economic Peace.

Kadima MK Yohanan Plessner on Monday resubmitted a bill – submitted in the past by Likud MKs Reuven Rivlin and Gideon Sa'ar – to limit the number of cabinet ministers to 18. In his original proposal, drafted prior to the previous Knesset, Sa'ar wrote: "The expense of appointing so many ministers is a waste of crucial public funds."

Olmert cleared in one charge

Ehud Olmert has been cleared by police in one of the corruption investigations against him. The Israel Police national fraud unit said there was insufficient evidence to charge the outgoing prime minister in a corruption scandal involving a home Olmert purchased in Jerusalem for far below market value, according to news reports. Olmert has been under investigation in the matter for the last three years. He was suspected of giving favours to the company that built the home in exchange for the lower purchase price. Olmert denies wrongdoing. Attorney General Menachem Mazuz must still make a final decision to close the case. Police have recommended that Olmert be indicted in two other corruption scandals.

Water champion

Israel was named the world's most efficient recycled water user in a United Nations report, issued in honour of International Water Day, March 22, 2009. The UN report also ranked Israel as a world leader in desalinated water use. Israel purifies and re-uses almost 70 per cent of its waste water each year for agriculture, and much of the leftover water is reused for other purposes.

Most Israelis happy

A majority of Israelis are happy, a new poll says. In a survey on happiness, some 86 per cent of Israelis said they're happy with their lives – 30 per cent said very happy and 56 percent said happy. For married respondents, 53 percent were very happy and 44 per cent happy in their marriage. The survey found those with higher incomes tend to be happier, and that the happiness of married people doesn't increase as much by an increase in income as that of a single person. Immigrants are more likely to be happy than native-born Israelis, the poll found, and the more voluntary the aliyah the happier the immigrant. The survey, conducted by the polling firm Dahaf on behalf of the Jerusalem Institute of Market Studies, questioned 1,006 adult Jewish Israelis.

30-year peace anniversary

Egypt's president reiterated his commitment to peace with Israel on the 30th anniversary of the Egypt-Israel peace deal. The peace treaty was signed by Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin on March 26, 1979. Speaking by telephone with Israeli President Shimon Peres, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said he has no intention of changing his policies regarding peace with Israel, and that "whoever seeks war has never felt what war really is." Peres expressed his gratitude to Mubarak. An editorial in the Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram, however, criticized Israel. "There is no room for celebration. On this anniversary, there isn't an atmosphere of optimism, and the facts on the ground are not pushing anyone toward celebration."

Air defence for India

Israel Aerospace Industries will develop and manufacture air defence systems for India. The $1.4-billion contract was officially announced March 26. The deal was signed Feb. 27, Israel's daily business newspaper, Globes, reported.

Another coalition partner

The party Habayit Hayehudi (the Jewish household) signed a deal to join Benjamin Netanyahu's government coalition. The right-wing religious party agreed to join the new government a day after the Labor Party voted to enter the coalition. Habayit Hayehudi will be able to name the head of the science, sport and culture ministry, and will hold the chairmanship of the Knesset Welfare for the Child and the Education committees each for one-third of the government's term in office.

– *with files from JTA*

Barbadian man faces murder charges in Schwarzfeld's death

Compiled by CJN Staff

An arrest has been made in the killing of Terry Schwarzfeld, who died in an Ottawa hospital on March 18, about three weeks after she was attacked and robbed on a beach in Barbados.

Curtis Joel Foster, 24, has previously pleaded guilty to robbing five tourists, including a pair from Canada. He must appear in a Barbados court to face murder charges in Schwarzfeld's death.

On Feb. 28, an assailant attacked Schwarzfeld, national president of Canadian Hadassah WIZO, and her daughter-in-law, Luana Cotsman – who is recovering from her injuries – with a wooden plank as they walked on an isolated stretch of beach in the late afternoon.

Schwarzfeld suffered bleeding and swelling on her brain and was taken to a Barbados hospital. She was later airlifted to Ottawa Hospital, were she remained unconscious until she succumbed to her injuries.

Commissioner Darwin Dottin of the Royal Barbados Police Force said that when Foster was arrested, officers recovered jewelry and a camera that belonged to Schwarzfeld and Cotsman.

Mitchell Bellman, president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, said that Schwarzfeld's family, including her husband, Stephen Cotsman, are pleased that an arrest has been made and are hopeful that police have caught the right person.

"Their interests are in seeing justice served and also in preventing further attacks on anyone else," Bellman told the Ottawa Citizen.

With files from JTA

Correction

The article titled "Community mourns Hadassah-WIZO president" (CJN March 26) misidentified the high commissioner of Barbados to Canada. The high commissioner, Evelyn Greaves, attended the March 20 funeral of Terry Schwarzfeld. The CJN regrets the error.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

AUTHOR SANA KRASIKOV WINS $100,000 SAMI ROHR PRIZE FOR DEBUT SHORT STORY COLLECTION

The U.S.-based Jewish Book Council has named **Sana Krasikov** as this year's recipient of the $100,000 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature. Krasikov wins the prize for her debut short story collection, One More Year (Spiegel & Grau), a work that demonstrates "a fresh vision" and a great potential of its young author to contribute to the world of Jewish letters in the future.

The prize is the largest of its kind in the Jewish literary world and one of the largest literary prizes worldwide. Inaugurated in 2006, it goes to emerging fiction and non-fiction authors in alternating years.

One More Year is "a book of exceptional literary merit that stimulates an interest in themes of Jewish concern," the prize committee said in a statement. Krasikov fills her canvas with portraits of new Russian and Georgian immigrants to the United States in the post-Cold War period, conveying a sense of "subtle considerations of moral conundrums, of futile hopes, and the calculus of lost possibility."

Fiction judge **Allen Hoffman** said her characters are often alienated and confused, but her stories are always clear and precise, because Krasikov deeply understands her characters' aspirations, fears and stubborn passion for survival. "Her elegant, revealing narratives imbue their fragile, vulnerable lives with an imposing dignity."

The Jewish Book Council has also announced it will give the $25,000 Choice Award to **Dalia Sofer** for her first novel The Septembers of Shiraz (Ecco), which describes the travails of a Jewish family in the period after the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The prize ceremony takes place in Manhattan's Museum of Jewish Heritage in May.

* * *

Film Screenings: Toronto Jewish Film Society presents two screenings of Lies My Father Told Me (Canada, 1975), a family drama set in 1920s Montreal. Producer **Harry Gulkin** and actor **Marilyn Lightstone** are scheduled to attend. Sunday, April 5, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. $15-$10.

* * *

Book Recalls Old "Ward" Neighbourhood: The local small press Exile Editions has produced a handsome, short volume featuring poetry and paintings of **Lawren Harris** that conveys some rich images of the Ward, the former Toronto neighbourhood where thousands of Jewish immigrants lived about 80 years ago.

Lawren Harris: In the Ward features some of Harris' urban poetry and paintings. The latter includes his renderings of one of the Eaton's factories, old houses in various stages of disrepair, lovely streetscapes, including many covered in snow, and scenes showing the creeping industrialization of residential city neighbourhoods.

The paintings present an exciting window into Harris' pre-Group of Seven career as well as into a central landing ground for many Jewish, Italian and other immigrants to Toronto in the early 1920s. The books is available in many bookstores.

* * *

At the Galleries: "Lit City – Toronto Through The Eyes of Artists and Authors" is an exhibition that pairs paintings with excerpts from books written about Toronto neighbourhoods. Works include **Linda R. Goldman**'s painting Brunswick Avenue, which is paired with the book Fables of Brunswick Avenue by **Katherine Govier**; numerous paintings of Kensington Market are also paired with the book Baldwin Street by **Alvin Rakoff**. Other artists include **Aba Bayefsky** and **Charles Pachter**. The exhibition was mounted to mark Toronto's 175th birthday and continues until June 13. Market Gallery, St. Lawrence Market, second floor.

Marilyn Lightstone

Sana Krasikov

Correction

The story "Emil Sher's play raises ethical issues" (CJN, March 26) contained an incorrect date. It should have said the play, Mourning Dove, runs at the Tarragon Theatre Extra Space until April 19. We regret the error.

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Art exhibit examines the Exodus

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

Abstract artist Lena Shugar has examined the biblical Exodus in a series of 13 acrylic and mixed media works.

Shugar's exhibition, The Exodus, at the Leonardo Galleries until April 23, also has personal meaning for her.

In 1939, when she was two years old, Shugar (formerly Bienstock), her parents and her brother fled Stanislav, Poland.

The other passengers on the crowded train they took insisted that her family leave the train when she developed measles. Looking back, she says this saved their lives as the others likely perished.

They survived World War II in a remote farmhouse in Russia, where a Russian family allowed them to remain for the duration of the war.

The family's exodus after the war took them from Russia to a displaced persons' camp in West Berlin. Then they went to Norway, and in 1951, they arrived in Canada, not knowing anyone.

"The Exodus was a turning point in mankind's transition from slavery to freedom, from polytheism and monotheism, from ancient values to modern ideals," Shugar says.

Her Exodus exhibit examines the giving of the Judaic Laws and the entry to the Promised Land.

"My exhibition is an attempt to augment our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world," she says.

Since her first major exhibition in 1990, Shugar's paintings have been included in private and corporate collections in Sweden, Israel, Canada and the United States. Her works have also been used as illustrations for magazine covers, for donation cards and for wine bottle labels.

Her mystical paintings, in acrylic and mixed media, reflect her multi-faceted talents and her expertise with complex colour depictions.

Shortly after her arrival in Toronto as a teenager, Shugar came under the tutelage of Doris McCarthy, one of Canada's foremost artists and teachers.

When the youngest of her three children started school, Shugar volunteered in the creative arts department at Baycrest and returned to her pursuit of a career as a professional artist.

The painting The Crossing is featured in Lena Shugar's Exodus exhibition.

For more information about The Exodus exhibit, call 416-924-7296 or visit www.lenashugar.com. Leonardo Galleries is at 133 Avenue Rd.

Mezmerizing Holocaust film based on a hoax

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Misha Defonseca, an American writer, blasted to literary stardom 12 years ago with an unusual autobiographical book, Misha: A Memoir of the Holocaust Years.

The bestseller, translated into 18 languages, was about a Jewish girl from Brussels who wandered through the forests of Europe, living with wolves in summer and winter, in a desperate attempt to find her deported parents.

In 2001, a Boston newspaper raised questions about its veracity, but she stuck to her story. Last year, however, she admitted that her memoir was based on fantasy, that her real name was Monique de Waal, and that she was a Catholic whose parents had been members of the Belgian resistance movement.

Mathilde Goffart in Surviving with the Wolves.

Vera Belmont's French-language movie, Surviving with the Wolves – which will be screened at the Cinéfranco film festival on Sunday, April 5, at the Royal theatre at 608 College St. – is based on the book rather than on its post-publication controversy.

In light of the furor it ignited, it's questionable why Belmont made the film. But if you treat the book, and the film, as a fable of survival against the greatest of odds, you may understand Belmont's motives.

Still, Misha's epic story of endurance, as portrayed in this invariably gripping film, strains credulity.

How could an eight-year-old girl survive for so long? And more to the point, how did she manage to overcome the natural hostility of the wolves she encountered on her incredible trek from Belgium to Poland?

If you can suspend your skepticism and relate to Surviving with the Wolves as an allegory, you may even appreciate this off-the-beaten-track film.

It opens in Brussels in 1943 as a Jewish family, hidden in an attic, waits to be deported by the Nazis. Misha, a precocious girl, yearns for a normal life and a smile from her worried mother. But as Misha soon discovers, sheer survival is all she can hope for in these terrible and unpredictable times.

After she and her fellow Jewish students are temporarily hidden by a teacher at school, Misha witnesses a roundup of Jews. Shortly afterward, a member of the underground scoops her up and delivers Misha to a Christian family willing to hide and protect her.

Misha is given a new identity, but she is like a fish out of water. She misses her parents and does not feel at home in her new surroundings. She feels considerably better in a farmer's house, but when he and his wife are arrested, Misha embarks on her trip eastward.

The core of the movie turns on Misha's journey, and what a journey it proves to be.

She steals garments from a clothes line, encounters a German patrol, grapples with an unsympathetic farmer, rows across a river in a boat and forages for worms to fend off hunger pangs.

Amid a snow storm, she stumbles, only to be found by a wolf. Rather than attacking Misha, the wolf warms to her, finding food for her and accompanying her on an improbable odyssey.

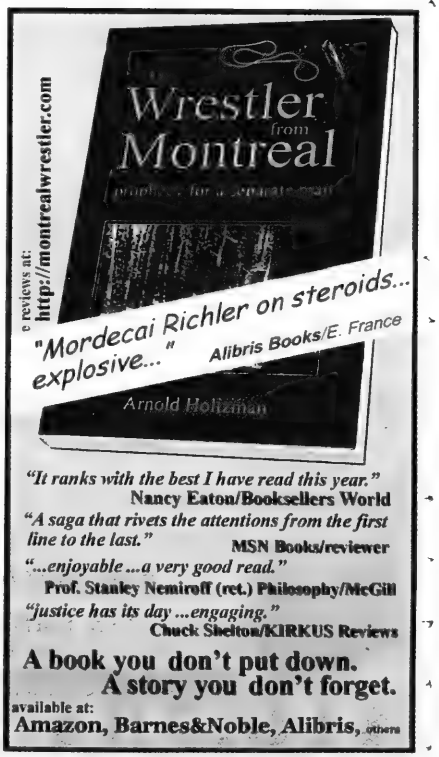
All this seems utterly implausible, until you remember that Surviving with the Wolves is a tall tale.

Just when you're saturated with Misha's heroic derring-do, you're plunged headlong into more scenes in which she proves her mettle as the ultimate survivor.

The movie is held together by Mathilde Goffart, who portrays Misha in what can only be described as a brilliant performance.

The Israeli actress, Yael Abecassis, plays Misha's mother.

Say what you will about Defonseca's hoax, but the film from which it is adapted is quite mesmerizing.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KlezKanada director aims to bring music to clubs

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Jason Rosenblatt, the new artistic director of KlezKanada, wants to bring eastern European Jewish music to the people, to smaller, more heimish venues where it was meant to be played.

Shtreiml founder Jason Rosenblatt, left, is the new artistic director of KlezKanada, headed by founder Hy Goldman, right.

Rosenblatt, a founding member of the klezmer band Shtreiml, has been assigned by KlezKanada founder and chair Hy Goldman to expand the organization's activities and presence in Montreal, and to develop both promising young artists in the genre and audiences that will appreciate it.

This is a new position (part time for now), reflecting Goldman's longtime desire to expand the KlezKanada brand beyond the weeklong summer program in the Laurentians, now in its 14th year. New York-based klezmer musician Jeff Warschauer remains the artistic director of that program, which is held at Camp B'nai Brith every August.

Rosenblatt's vision is to hold regular klezmer concerts throughout the year in the city – not big annual fundraisers, but shows in more intimate clubs, priced within reach of just about everybody.

He's also exploring the possibility of offering introductory klezmer sessions in Jewish and perhaps other schools. He is proposing to explain the history of the music and then play it, in the hope of "sowing the seeds of interest" in children in an art form that goes back centuries and is inextricably linked with Yiddish culture.

Rosenblatt also plans to organize afterschool coaching for budding klezmer players.

For the past few years, Rosenblatt has been living on and off in Philadelphia, where he taught in the city's Young Audiences series, intended to acquaint schoolchildren with music they might not otherwise be exposed to.

Talks are also underway to work with the (McGill) Ghetto Shul – whose rabbi, Leibish Hundert, is a musician – to organize weekly jams in conjunction with KlezKanada to reach a university-age crowd.

Greater visibility of KlezKanada in Montreal might encourage more local promising artists to apply for its camp scholarship program, or younger families who enjoy listening to the music to attend the camp together, Goldman believes.

Both Rosenblatt and his wife, Rachel Lemisch, are "alumni" of KlezKanada's scholarship program, which has grown to encompass 100 recipients each summer, from pre-teens to young adults, from around the world, including a strong contingent from the former Soviet bloc.

Film puts '80s heavy metal band back in the spotlight

By SHLOMO SCHWARTZBERG
Special to The CJN

Sometimes, nice guys do finish first.

At least, that's the case with the members of Anvil, the acclaimed Canadian heavy metal group that made a mark with its 1982 album Metal on Metal.

Metal on Metal received acclaim from fans and inspired a generation of heavyweights in the industry. Metallica, Anthrax and Slayer all lauded Anvil as significant musical trailblazers and the album as an inspiration.

Despite the massive praise, however, Anvil was unable, for various reasons, including timing and bad management, to parlay that groundbreaking album into a sustained, successful career.

Flash forward 25 years later to director Sacha Gervasi, a lifelong fan of the group who decided to immortalize them on film as they continued to play their music, all the while hoping for that elusive breakthrough, even as they held mundane jobs in catering and construction.

'There's real good energy about the music'

The film Anvil: The Story of Anvil follows the band as they worked on their 13th album, This is Thirteen, undertook a disastrous tour of eastern Europe and then followed it with a more gratifying one in Japan, one that allowed the film to end an upbeat, hopeful note. It premièred last year at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival to rave reviews and is now scheduled for commercial release, first in Toronto on April 3, before opening across North America in the weeks to follow. Anvil was also recently inducted into the Indies Hall of Fame, in Toronto, and performed in the city as part of Canadian Music Week.

So what's changed in the year since the movie had its world première at Hot Docs? I asked Steve (Lips) Ludlow and Robb Reiner, the two Jewish members of Anvil – Glenn Five is the third band member – over a nosh at Pancer's Deli, one of their hangouts, which was featured in the film. "Everything," answered Reiner. "We have a real manager, we have a real agent, we have real gigs [and] soon we'll have a real record company." (Sony is handling the group in Japan, but they're hoping to land a major label in North America soon.)

"At times, it's been overwhelming," Reiner said. "There's so much stuff that we're taking in – all the press, all the attention, all the love – there's an abundance of love."

"But we've been working at that for 30 years," Ludlow added, "so it's not like we're not ready for it. We've always believed in our music, in ourselves, all along. That's why we're still here, so even when there was disinterest [in Anvil], we stayed true to our music, lived in our own bubble and kept rocking on."

The two, who with their long hair and leather jackets look like the quintessential rockers, were at ease during the interview. They finished each other's sentences, each jumping in as soon as his bandmate paused, which makes sense as the Torontonians, who are in their early 50s, have been friends since they were teenagers and have performed together almost as long. (Glenn Five joined the band in the mid-'90s.)

Does the fact that they're Jewish – Reiner's late father was a Holocaust survivor – play a part in their determination to make a go of it against impossible odds, even, as in the film, when things look as grim as they could possibly be? "It's not really on a conscious level," Ludlow said, "[but] when you're raised in that [Jewish] environment, you learn to be tenacious and go after the things you want in life and be relentless [in doing so]."

The impact of the movie, which allowed Anvil to return to the limelight, has allowed the two to jettison their non-musical jobs and concentrate solely on their music. "We've got too many things going on with the band now to keep a regular job," Ludlow said.

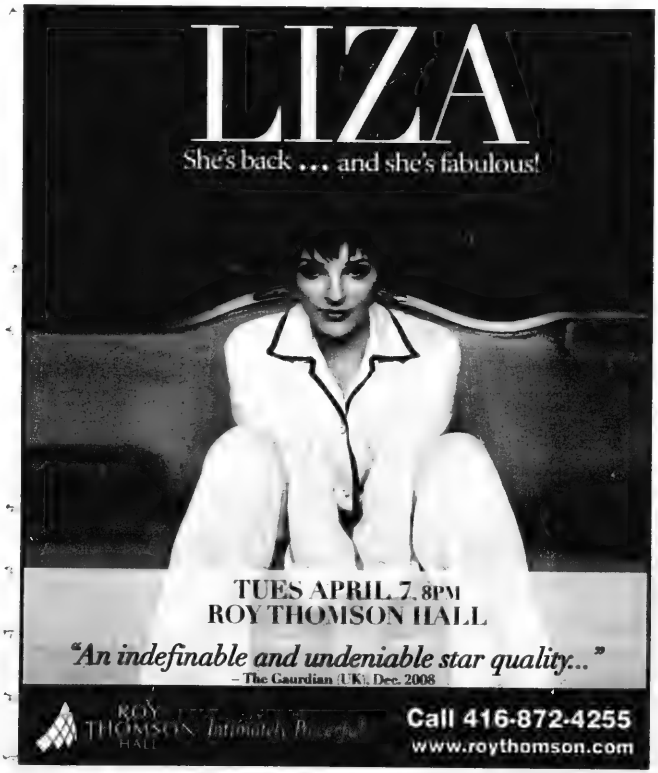
A 14th Anvil album, Juggernaut of Justice, will soon be out, as well. "It's already finished," Reiner said. "It just needs to be recorded."

And Ludlow has, with the help of a ghost writer, written a book, also called Anvil: The Story of Anvil, which can be ordered on Amazon.

Fans of Anvil will see the change in the band's fortunes reflected in their new disc. "It's definitely got a brightness to it that's never been there before," Ludlow said.

They also said that their current success is something they can appreciate in a way they might not been able to had they hit it big in their 20s. "At our age, it's not going to be squandered. It will be completely and utterly appreciated with every moment," Ludlow said.

He considers that their current good fortune was meant to be, using the Hebrew word bashert to explain that view. "That's how it really has felt right from the onset. It felt that all my trials and tribulations were necessary for this movie to ever have legs, so that's why I mean that it's meant to be."



TRAVEL TALK

By BILL GLADSTONE

TEL AVIV MARKS ITS 100th ANNIVERSARY

The first modern Israeli city, Tel Aviv, was founded on April 11, 1909. To mark its 100th anniversary, a wide array of centennial events are being planned, including outdoor festivals, art shows, sporting events, historic exhibitions and numerous community projects.

The city kicks off its centennial on April 4 with a Gala Opening at Rabin Square, featuring performances by top Israeli and international artists. A grand-scale 360-degree audiovisual display will surround the square, encompassing the crowd. Maestro Zubin Mehta will conduct the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and the Israeli Opera, two leading cultural institutions based in Tel Aviv-Yafo. For details, see the website www.tlv100.co.il.

* * *

THE BIBLE AND FILM: Currently on display at the Museum of Biblical Art in Manhattan is the exhibition Reel Religion: A Century of the Bible and Film, which probes the fascination the Bible has exerted over filmmakers from Cecil B. deMille to Martin Scorsese. The exhibition features 80 rare vintage movie posters reaching back to the dawn of film in 1898. A selection of original costumes worn by Hollywood screen stars and related film ephemera are also on view. 1865 Broadway at 61st St., by Columbus Circle. Until May 17.

* * *

CHINA THROUGH JEWISH EYES: Toronto's New Wave Travel offers China, A Journey Through Jewish Eyes, an October tour that takes in the sights of Beijing, including the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, and includes Shabbat services with members of the Beijing Jewish community. The itinerary also includes Harbin, Kaifeng, Xian, Guilin, the Li River, Shanghai and Suzhou. The 17-day tour is escorted by travel professional Harriet Morton; a three-night Hong Kong extension is available. Travel dates are Oct. 14 to 30. Contact Harriet Morton or Joe Lupiani, 416-928-3113, ext. 274 or 265. harriet@new-wavetravel.net

* * *

BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL BREAKS RECORDS: After nine days of open registration, more than 35,000 young North American Jews applied for only 8,000 available free, 10-day educational trips to Israel this spring and summer. While the number of spots has returned to a former high point, the number of eligible registrants for those spots has doubled.

Research indicates that the program, which started nine years ago, has become the most effective method to combat the alarming trend of young Jews becoming distant from their respective Jewish communities and from Israel. Many have described the Birthright Israel trip as a veritable new Jewish rite of passage.

"What a bittersweet achievement," says program spokesperson Gidi Mark. "We are taking as many participants this year as could ever be expected in this economy, but we're also at risk of leaving behind more than ever before. It's an extraordinary challenge." To meet the challenge, the Birthright Israel Foundation has launched a new fundraising campaign to help send more young Jews to Israel.

* * *

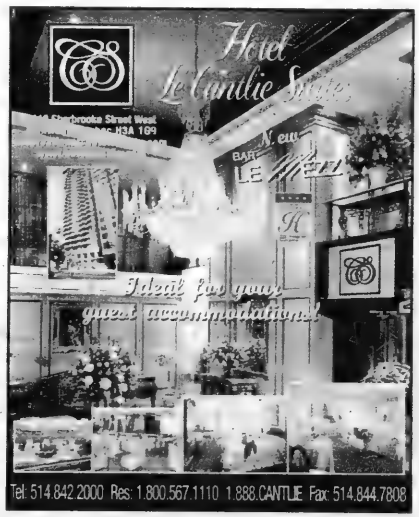
ISRAEL NOTES

• The Vatican has announced that the Pope will visit Israel from May 8 to 11. It will be Benedict XVI's first visit to Israel since accompanying Pope John Paul II there in 2000. The Pontiff is scheduled to tour the Western Wall and a variety of Christian and Jewish holy sites in the company of Israeli President Shimon Peres.

• A new exhibition highlighting the work of modern Israeli ceramic artists is on view at the Ha'aretz Museum in Tel Aviv. The fifth Israeli Ceramics Biennale presents the works of 57 artists influenced by new-age Israeli ceramics. It remains on view throughout May. www.eretz-museum.org.il

• Paper, a seemingly basic material that lends itself easily to many functions, is the focal point for a new exhibition at Ticho House in Jerusalem. The exhibition Paperworks presents works by contemporary artists such as Hilla Ben Ari, Yifat Bezalel, Jan Tichy, Shaul Zemach and Maya Zack, who use paper as the central or exclusive material, creating imaginary worlds imbued with new meaning.

• Israel's Hula Lake Park was named by BBC Wildlife Magazine as one of the most outstanding sites in the world for nature observation and photography. The park is home to millions of migrating cranes each winter.



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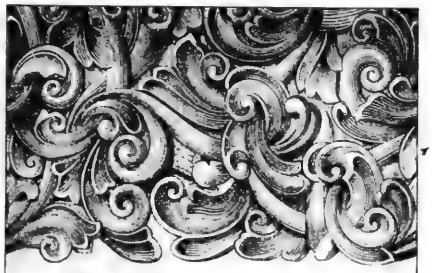

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Best friends sell underwear via online subscription service

By RITA POLIAKOV
Special to The CJN

Lori Sholzberg and Natalie Grunberg's business idea came from a trip to France.

Based on an afternoon in a French café and a look through an underwear drawer, the two friends developed Panty by Post, a Vancouver-based company that has been selling underwear online since last December.

"Basically, it all started in France, as most good things do," said Grunberg. "This summer I was there, in the south of France, sitting in a café, thinking about how beautiful people are there, how well they present themselves. It got me thinking, these people probably don't have granny panties."

Using the philosophy that beauty starts within, Grunberg had the idea to sell panties online and deliver them by mail – a subscription service for lingerie.

"I was really inspired by the French presentation, I was thinking... they look [good] on the outside, I bet their underwear is nice."

It took one e-mail to get Sholzberg, her friend and former university roommate, onboard.

"Lori and I were really excited about panties," Grunberg said. "As soon as we got home, we started planning the idea at the kitchen table."

For Sholzberg, the idea just sounded like fun.

"I was in the midst of moving to Vancouver. She e-mailed me from Paris... Right away, I said, 'Can I jump on board?'" she said.

"I think a lot of women are [interested in panties]. This makes me feel good about myself, and it's girly. I think we're both sort of... I don't want to use the term girly girls, but we like frilly and fun stuff."

The two friends first met at Bishop's University.

"It feels like we've known each other all our lives... We seem to just equal each other out... Natalie is a business partner and a best friend, but we're able to separate that," Sholzberg said.

During their first meeting, which took place in Sholzberg's kitchen, the two began looking for companies to partner with.

"We had the same sort of idea of what we were looking for – fun and frilly," Sholzberg said. She decided to look through her own underwear drawer and pick out her favourites. Eventually, she pulled out a pair made by Blush Lingerie, a family-owned company located in Montreal.

"It was a pair I had for years. They look brand new," she said, adding that the underwear was actually a gift from her husband when they were still engaged.

Natalie Grunberg, left, and Lori Sholzberg founded Panty by Post, a lingerie subscription, to help women feel fun, girly, and better about themselves.

The panties are bright red, with black bows on each hip and a heart in the centre. They are cute and frilly, but mostly, they are comfortable.

"I love the way they fit. Blush makes panties that don't cut in," she said. "[Panties] can cut into places that aren't flattering – they can make you feel worse. [Blush] has a cut based on the real woman."

And most importantly, Sholzberg's Blush underwear made her feel good.

"I like to dance in the living room in them sometimes – it makes me feel girlish," she said.

Having just moved to Vancouver from Montreal, Sholzberg also appreciated the connection to her old home.

"It was from Montreal, where I spent the better part of my life... It had a bit of an interest for me, it was close to home," she said.

The two partners chose to set up Panty by Post because it was something they could do while maintaining full-time jobs. Grunberg teaches grades 8 to 12 and Sholzberg works at Safe Teen, an organization that develops workshops for teenagers about violence and bullying.

"We wanted something that was transportable, unique and limitless in terms of opportunities... because it appeals to the whole world," she said, adding that they have had clients from as far as the United Kingdom and Sudan.

While customers can choose their own products through the website, Sholzberg and Grunberg also liked the element of surprise that a subscription business offered.

"Most people like the surprise. We're trying to bring back a nostalgic feeling," Sholzberg said.

Both Sholzberg and Grunberg see the underwear drawer as a kind of candy counter.

"It's an inexpensive treat," Grunberg said. "Everyone needs panties, like everyone needs toothpaste... Imagine pulling open the underwear drawer, you have different colours, different styles."

The company is also expanding into the bridal business with Something Blue and male underwear with Briefs in a Box.

"For men, it's a little bit more of a necessity than a decadence. We're going to look more on durability and sustainability."

As Panty by Post takes off, the business partners would like to give back to their community.

In February, they raised $12,000 for the Leukemia and Bone Marrow Transplant Program at Vancouver General Hospital at a benefit that featured jazz singer Diana Krall. The benefit raised a total of more than $2 million. The event was especially significant for Grunberg, whose father battled leukemia.

Panty by Post has also had a positive response from the Jewish community.

"[They're] loving it," Sholzberg said.

Sholzberg, whose mother was a Hebrew teacher, received a particularly good response from people after an article about Panty by Post was published in a Montreal newspaper.

"I got such feedback, we got lots of e-mail – the response in every department has been tremendous. For me, with the Jewish religion, there's always been a connection," she said.

Panty by Post's website address is www.pantybypost.com.

CHECK OUT OUR BLOG @ HEEBONICS.CA

CJN Profile

Broadcaster Martin Himel produces TV series on religious faith

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The collision of current events and religious faith has long intrigued Canadian broadcast journalist Martin Himel, who has been stationed in Israel since the early 1980s.

"I believe we are all driven by some sort of faith," he said. "I've covered world events for more than two decades, and I feel that faith is a universal theme intrinsic to all of us. I wanted to explore that common trait and see how it impacts various societies."

In pursuit of this theme, Himel has produced a 13-part documentary series for Vision TV. Twist of Faith, which had its debut on Feb. 23 and ends on June 1, examines a broad range of topics and issues, from the future of Judaism to Islam in China.

Joan Jenkinson, a Vision TV executive producer, believes that Himel's series strikes a contemporary note.

As she put it, "These are desperate times for many of us. We are seeing faith take ever more unusual and unexpected forms as people seek solid ground. While we commonly hear that religion is on the wane, Himel's extraordinary series illustrates the degree to which our world is still shaped by the power of belief – for good and ill."

Canadian journalist Martin Himel visited Asia to complete Twist of Faith.

Describing Twist of Faith as his most ambitious project to date, Himel said he has always been interested in the effect of religion on current affairs.

"You might remember that the religion of rebellion and activism in the 1970s was socialism, communism and radical anarchism. These were fervently held beliefs, just as militant Islam, fundamentalist Christianity and Judaism are upheld today as motivators for national movements."

He launched Twist of Faith in December 2007 through his Canadian company, Elsash Productions.

Vision TV, which financed the venture, was clearly impressed by his track record as a filmmaker. A former CTV news correspondent in Israel, Himel has made a succession of documentaries, some of which touch on the nature of faith.

In Angels with Broken Wings (2001) and North Korea: Desperate or Deceptive (2004), he respectively highlighted the plight of thousands of children locked in closed Russian psychoneurological hospital wards and explored the social, political and economic landscape of a totalitarian Asian society at odds with the United States.

Himel's documentary on Israel's reoccupation of the West Bank, Jenin: Massacring the Truth (2004), challenged the allegation that Israel had committed war crimes in attacking a Palestinian refugee camp from which suicide bombers set out.

His film on anti-Israel student movements on North American college campuses, Confrontation at Concordia (2003), documented the clash between Jewish and pro-Palestinian students at Montreal's Concordia University after a planned speaking engagement by Israel's former prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was abruptly cancelled.

Himel's End of Days (2005) investigated the growing belief in apocalypse and redemption among evangelical Christians and messianic Jews.

For Twist of Faith, he travelled far and wide, visiting Canada, the United States, Kosovo, Serbia, Britain, Russia, China, India, Thailand, Ethiopia, South Africa and Turkey. He also reported from Israel, his home base, and the West Bank.

His travels took him off the beaten track.

Researching Hindu untouchables in India, Himel interviewed sewage workers. "The gases are overwhelming. I don't know how they last one day, let alone years working in the sewers. It didn't take two days before I was deathly sick. I hit the floor twice at Delhi's airport from the agonizing pain of severe stomach cramps, brought on by bacterial infection. It made me think how easy it is to die in those sewers."

Travelling through China's Gobi Desert, Himel was struck by the perception that Chinese mosques are "an elegant mixture" of pagoda temples and Arabian minarets.

Investigating Judaism, he was taken by its sheer adaptability and the passion of Israelis for their identity. "It is that passion which is so essential for Jews to be Jews."

Deep in the highlands of Ethiopia to study Ethiopian Christianity, he felt as if he had gone back in time.

Himel, 52, a graduate of Associated Hebrew Schools and Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto day schools, was raised in a secular Zionist household in Toronto. Although he is not an observant Jew, he values Jewish traditions and culture.

As a child, his parents divorced. His mother, Malka, a former Israeli, was a prominent Canadian folk singer and part of the Malka and Joso duo. His father, Sydney, was a lawyer and a member of Canada's basketball team in the first and second Maccabiah Games in Israel.

Himel gravitated toward journalism when he was a teenager. Don Cameron, a Canadian TV producer who had covered the war in Vietnam, visited the Himel household in suburban Toronto and regaled him with stories of the fall of Saigon in 1975. "I remember feeling, 'This is what I want to do.' I was smitten."

After graduating from high school, he studied economics and international relations at the Hebrew University. "I had always had a passion for Israel. Its vigour and zest were so appealing, but living in Israel, while rewarding, was very difficult."

Returning to Canada in 1978, Himel landed a position at CTV's Canada AM program. "Then I got a chance to work as a field producer for ABC TV in Israel, covering the prime minister, Menachem Begin."

Parlaying that opportunity into a gig as a freelance Mideast correspondent, Himel contributed reports to CTV, Global Television and Fox News.

From 1982 to 1993, as CTVs bureau chief and resident correspondent, he covered the breaking stories of the day, not only in Israel but in Europe as well.

"My most memorable stories were Israel's peace treaty with Egypt and Israel's phased withdrawals from the Sinai Peninsula, the first Palestinian uprising, the revolution in Romania and the Gulf War."

When CTV asked Himel to take another assignment, he declined. "After covering massive world events in the Middle East, all else paled in comparison," said Himel, who today contributes current events pieces to PBS and Dan Rather Reports. "I also had personal relationships that I wanted to preserve in Israel."

Himel switched to the Baton Broadcasting group after he was asked to set up an Israeli operation.

Eight years ago, he established Elsash Productions, which now enjoys a reputation for innovative in-depth reporting.

Himel, who has permanent residence status in Israel, lives with his wife in the northern Tel Aviv suburb of Herzliya Pituach.

"I have a lot of roots in Israel," said Himel, the father of two grown children and a Magen David Adom volunteer medic who worked on emergency teams during the 2006 war in Lebanon and the most recent war in the Gaza Strip. "I have a great passion for this place. It's a vibrant life, and I love the fact that the Mediterranean Sea is only a 10 minutes' walk from my house."

And while he finds Israeli politics "shamelessly corrupt" and the educational system "abhorrent," he likes Israelis.

"The people are terrific. It is hard to be lonely in Israel. Everybody makes your business their business. Sometimes, it is oppressive, but if you are in trouble, many people are willing to help.

"And there is always something real to talk about. It's never just, 'What did you buy in town today?'"

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A charming history of the unassuming bagel

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Can there be anything more quintessentially Jewish for breakfast than a toasted bagel – make it a sesame one, please – slathered with cottage cheese and lox? Not likely, unless you're on a strict diet or allergic to flour.

The bagel is so connected with culinary Jewish identity that few observers have bothered to investigate its provenance. But as Maria Balinska reminds us in The Bagel: The Surprising History of a Modest Bread (Yale University Press), the antecedents of the bagel may not be necessarily Jewish.

Maria Balinska

In this altogether charming and scholarly book, Balinska – an American whose ancestors are both Jewish and Polish Catholic – suggests that the bagel as we know it today may well have been preceded by the Polish *bajgiel* or *obwarzanek*, the Italian *tarallo* and the Chinese Muslim *girde*.

Balinska, who bit into her first bagel in the early 1980s when she was a university student, explores its historical trajectory at some length, but she focuses her inquiry on Poland, where the bagel was a favoured snack of both Jews and Christians of every class.

However, the bagel was principally produced by Jewish bakers and sold mainly by Jewish pedlars. By the 1930s, the bagel was "a Jewish product that was an integral part of Polish everyday life," she writes.

Having explored the status of the bagel in Poland, where it was popular tavern and street fare, Balinska moves on to the United States, where it has attained universal appeal thanks to the marketing skills of the Lender family.

As best as she can determine, the unassuming bagel arrived in America in the 1880s, when waves of Jewish immigrants, among them bakers, settled in New York City. According to Balinska, the craving for bagels was instrumental in the development of the Jewish labour movement in the United States.

Jewish bagel bakers on the Lower East Side worked under appalling conditions, as she observes: "The bakeries were located… down steep flights of stairs to a space rarely higher than seven feet. Because of the rudimentary ovens, the temperature was fierce and, on the whole, impossible to control. There was no ventilation. Bakers worked stripped to their waist for 13 or 14 hours a day, seven days a week.

"Typically young and unmarried, they often lived at their workplace sleeping between the mounds of rising dough and the oven with cats, rats and cockroaches…"

In response, the first Jewish bakers' union was formed in 1885. But it soon fell apart, says Balinska without explanation. "It would take a group of other workers to organize the bakers into something more lasting," she notes.

The muckraking press lobbied for better working and sanitary conditions, and the New York State Assembly got the message. In 1895, it passed a law hailed by reformers. Bakers were banned from sleeping in bakeries. Hours were regulated. Plumbing and drainage were introduced.

Interestingly enough, cats were allowed to remain in bakeries so that they could deal with rodents.

The legislation, backed with enforcement standards, was replicated by other states in the country.

But as Balinska points out, further improvements were necessary. In 1910, Jewish bakers won a nine-hour day.

The bakers' victory ushered in a period in which the Jewish labour movement came to play a leading role among American unions.

Yet bagel baking was impervious to "mechanical challenges" for a long time. The mark of a good baker was his ability to "roll" a bagel, a skilled and demanding function. Yet there was no machine capable of performing this all-important task.

This problem was resolved with the advent of the modern revolving oven, which also accelerated the rate at which bagels could be baked, she says. "It also meant that the bagel bakeries could, at last, move out of their dingy cellars."

A staple of Jewish households, the bagel shot into mainstream prominence when a major American magazine, the Saturday Evening Post, praised it in a 1958 piece. Look, another magazine, took notice in 1961, and McCalls, a competitor, followed suit two years later.

It was left to a Polish-born baker, Harry Lender, who landed in the United States in 1927, to popularize the bagel beyond anyone's imagination.

A true innovator, Lender froze his bagels and packaged them in polyethylene bags. Now the bagel could be sold in supermarkets. As Lender put it, "So we went from freezing as a convenience to us to a marketing tool for the consumer."

As Balinska says, this was a path-breaking development that revolutionized the industry. "Frozen food was becoming integral to American eating habits as more women worked outside the home, and the daily commute to the workplace put a premium on quickly-prepared meals."

Despite the changes, the bagel was still perceived by the majority of Americans as an ethnic specialty bread. Lender addressed this issue by trying to broaden its appeal.

"When most people call it a Jewish product, it hurts us," he said. "It's a roll, a roll with a personality. You can use it for breakfast, sandwiches, TV snacks, dinner rolls – from morning till evening. We don't talk of bagels, lox and cream cheese. It limits them. Think of toasted bagels and jam, if you like."

Lender's strategy proved successful. In the early 1970s, he snagged his first nation-wide food service contract with the Howard Johnson hotel and restaurant chain. By 1977, Lender bagels were available all across the nation.

Balinska says that the widespread acceptance of the bagel was rooted in timing.

"The market for bagels was expanding at a time when the cultural mood of the country was changing. It was not just that anti-Semitism had ceased to be respectable, or that the Jewish community was growing in confidence. There was also, more generally, a shift away from the homogeneity and standardization promoted in American popular culture …"

Thankfully, toward the end of her book, Balinska takes note of Montreal's famous bagels.

"To this day," she writes, "the city's two landmark bagel bakeries, the St. Viateur Bagel Shop and the Fairmount Bagel Bakery, continue to vie for Montreal's 'original bagel' crown."

Personally, I like the bagels from St. Viateur's wood-burning ovens. But who's to say that Fairmount bagels are inferior?

Any of them will do for breakfast, lunch or dinner, and I suspect that Balinska would agree.

IN CONVERSATION

Heather Reisman & George Friedman
Monday, April 6th, 7pm
Indigo Manulife Centre, Toronto
Join us as our Chief Booklover interviews author **George Friedman** as they discuss *The Next 100 Years* – a readable forecast of the changes we can expect around the world during the twenty-first century.
Book signing to follow.

Chapters Indigo COLES
chapters.indigo.ca
Proof of purchase required from any Indigo, Chapters or Coles location.

CLASSIFIED DIRECTORY

5 HOUSES FOR SALE
10 HOUSES FOR SALE PRIVATE
15 HOUSES FOR RENT
20 HOUSES FOR SALE/RENT
24 HOUSES WANTED TO BUY
25 HOUSES WANTED TO RENT
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472 RETIREMENT HOMES
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481 SEWING
485 SNOW REMOVAL
490 TABLE COVERING
493 TAILORING/ALTERATIONS
495 TILING
496 TRAINING
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500 TUTORING
510 UPHOLSTERY
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515 WATERPROOFING
520 WINDOW SERVICES
550 WORKSHOPS

REAL ESTATE Section

5 HOUSES FOR SALE

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EARLY DEADLINE NOTICE

April 17th & 23rd issues
Deadline for April 17th is Monday April 6th at 2:00 p.m.
Deadline for April 23rd is Monday April 13th at 2:00 p.m.
416-391-1836 (ask for classified advertising)

Regular Weeks Classified Deadlines:
Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. 8 days prior to issue date.*
All Classified ads require prepayment *before* deadline.
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The CJN cannot be responsible for more than one incorrect insertion. Please bring any problems to the attention of your sales representative before your ad is repeated.

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• • •

BATHURST / HILLHURST – NEW LISTING
Spacious 3 bdrm raised bung on fab 50 ft lot. Plans & permits for 4,000+ sq. ft. home. **$799,000.** Call David Eichorn* (416) 787-1712.

• • •

AVENUE / BATHURST / LAWRENCE
40 X 120 ft lot surrounded by luxury homes in prime central location. Only $699,000. Call David Eichorn* (416) 787-1712.

• • •

CONDOS AND HOUSES FOR RENT
- **BATH / LAW New Listing** 3 br, 2 storey steps to Law Plaza, $1,800 / mo.
- **ENCORE – BATH / LAW** Charming 2 bdrm, 2 bath condo, open balc, modern kit, Lawrence Plaza, $1,750 / mo as is or $2,000 / mo furnished.
- **AVENUE / BATHURST / LAWRENCE** 3 + 2 br bung, separate entry to huge bsmt, hrdwd, 2 eat-in kitchens, parkette side & back, $2,500 / mo.

*BROKER OF RECORD

SOLD

BATHURST / WILSON
Picturesque Allingham Gdns Spacious 3 bdrm bung on 51 ft. lot, 3 baths, hrdwd flrs, combined lr/dr ideal for entertaining, huge rec room, attached gar. Prime location close to all amenities. 3 baths, attached garage. Call David Eichorn* (416) 787-1712.

BATHURST / VIEWMOUNT
Spacious 3 + 1 bdrm ranch bungalow on generous 50 x 140 ft lot. 3 baths, sep entry to self-contained in-law suite, huge front porch, potential for 2nd storey addition. Fab location close to park, subway, schools ++. **ONLY $629,000.** Call David Eichorn* (416) 787-1712.

• • •

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$619,000! Yonge N/Sheppard! Spectacular 50x 120' lot on best part of block! Live in/add on/build new! Sandon Schwartzben** 416-226-1987

$572K! SPACIOUS DET. 4Br @ BATHURST/DREWRY!
This home has a fantastic layout w/large principal rms. Steps to Shuls + amenities. Andre Levy-Bencheton* 416-226-1987

$419,900! 1.5 STRY DETACH @ BATHURST/YORK DOWNS!
3Br, 2Bth w/large main levle family room & w/out to an oversized Deck & large backyard! Andre Levy-Bencheton* 416-226-1987

NORTH PROPERTIES

$3,460M! PRESTIGIOUS BAYVIEW GLEN!
5 Bdrms all w/ens, 'Stutt' kit w/cntre island+grnte cntertops! Hdwd flr+ l/stne firs! W/o Lwr lvl! Circ 4 car grge! Sharon Bobkin* 416-226-1987

$379K! DETACH AT BATHURST & CLARK!
ATTN: 1ST TIME BUYERS!! Close to Bayt & Chabad! 3Br+fin bsmt, upgrd big yard, deck, double drivewy & more. Hedda Zaionz* 416-226-1987

BAYVIEW PROPERTIES

$5,880M! DESIRABLE B/VIEW+YRK MILLS RESIDENCE!
WOW! Absolutely stunning masterpiece on gated 160x149' lot! 5 Bdrms, fin'd wlk-up lwr/lvl+elvtrs! Sharon Bokbin* 416-226-1987

$1,888M! NEW CUSTOM RES IN ST. ANDREWS!
Gorg'us res in prime location! 5 Bdrms, 10' ceils, skylight, hrdwd floors thru-out! Walk to subway! Sharon Bobkin* 416-226-1987

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Approx 2500' + 700' sq. ft. of magnificent rooftop terrace! 2 Bedrooms, soaring ceilings! Sharon Bobkin* 416-226-1987

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$2600/MO! BATHURST+WILSON! EXCELLENT LOCATION!
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CLARK-NEW WESTMINSTER
$475,000. – Dare to Compare. Detached 3 bdrm on quiet court. Large lot, 2 car garage w/entry. Prof fin'd lower level, main flr Family rm, upgraded & recent updates. Maxine Povering** Ext. #308

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$329,000 - Suite 1006 - 2 bdrm/2 bath approx 1004 sf. Quiet side of building, treetop & sunset views, large bedrooms, master ensuite with separate tub & shower.

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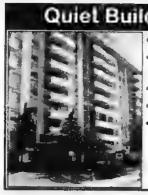

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Need someone who can take care of an elderly lady, live-in. Refs. req'd. call 416-603-1710.

Need someone to take care of a 3 yr. old girl, live-in, refs. req'd. Please Call 289-240-0520.

Someone needed to take care of a 9 yr. old & 6 yr. old, live-in, refs. req'd. Call 905-686-7990.

257 HEALTHCARE AVAILABLE

Diabetic foot care nurse specialist can take care of your feet in home or our clinic. 416-717-4503.

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• Live-in Care
• Healthcare Coordination
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www.qualicare.ca

259 SENIORS

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273 INTRODUCTION SERVICES

Let me find you your perfect match! For all ages. Call Tova at 647-895-3371.

305 ARTICLES WANTED

Ben Buys Book Collections, manuscripts, diaries, letters, documents & militaria. 416-890-9644.

Health & Lifestyles

Serving healthy snacks

By LISA WEINBERG
Special to The CJN

About Nutrition

Q. I need help with after-school snacks. I have three kids who all come home starving, and I find it a real struggle to serve healthy snacks that please and fill them.

A. I think there are three things that need to be considered at this time of day:

- What, how much and how well have they eaten so far today?
- When will they eat next? (Is dinner in one hour or four hours, and what will they be doing in the meantime – do they have an active program now?)
- What appeals to them?

Many kids come home having eaten very little all day. They had a small, usually rushed breakfast, say they didn't have enough time to finish their lunch, didn't have a recess snack because they couldn't eat it with gloves on or were too busy playing soccer (which is fine), but then they arrive home legitimately starving, and for many kids, not eating a decent snack at this time may lead to deteriorating behaviour later.

If your kids are like most, the last thing they eat in their lunch box is the fruit or vegetables, if they eat them at all, so, often, the kids haven't really eaten much that's healthy. In that case, a meal or mini-meal sometimes works best. If it's getting close to dinnertime, serving dinner right after school can be a great way to get a balanced, nutritious meal into kids and fill them up. If dinner is several hours away and/or there are sports activities first, a mini-meal may be appropriate rather than a snack – a sandwich, soup, wrap, salad, sushi, cereal, eggs, cheese and crackers, all better than chips, cookies and ice cream.

Next, consider what they like and jazz it up. A milkshake or fruit smoothy can be full of calcium and protein-rich milk, yogurt and frozen yogurt plus fruit, but looks delightfully appealing. A sundae with cut up banana, berries and frozen yogurt, and topped with chocolate sauce, has lots of nutrition, dressed up like dessert. For a chicken caesar (most kids like caesar salad and grilled chicken), you can put the salad in a wrap. Or try soup, hummus and pita, cereal, eggs and toast, grilled cheese, peanut butter and jam.

I find at my house that if I have cut up fruit or vegetables out on the counter between after school and dinner, it will disappear. If these are not out, the tendency can be to reach for cookies or other sweets. Having it ready and visible does seem to work for anything from sliced apples to berries, watermelon, grapes, peeled carrots, sliced peppers, cherry tomatoes.

Remember, too, that some of the best and most nutritious snacks can be last night's leftovers – chicken, pasta, stir-frys, chili, soups, etc. So make extra of family favourites that can be easily microwaved and enjoyed.

Lisa Weinberg is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in Toronto, in private practice and at the Genesis Professional Group. If you have any nutrition questions, please send them to The CJN.

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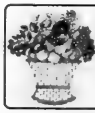

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Israel tied by Greece at home in World Cup qualifier

By DAVID MAROUANI and YANIV KUBOVICH
Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

RAMAT GAN — Israel's 1-1 draw against Greece Saturday is the latest development in a continuing, dubious tradition. Since defeating Austria 10 years ago in Ramat Gan by a 5-0 margin, Israel has not managed – regardless of who the coach or the players were – to defeat at home a single national team that is considered at least as good as or better than it is.

The picture is equally bleak abroad. Since joining Europe, Israel has never pulled off an upset on a better team's turf. And although the 3-2 historic win over France shocked the Old World, it was a meaningless game for Israel – similar to the 2-1 win at home over Russia a year and a half ago.

"The team's big problem during the tenure of [previous coaches Richard Moller] Nielsen, Avram Grant and [current coach] Dror Kashtan is that the players are afraid to attack during home matches," says former player Alon Mizrahi. "In my day and that of Eyal Berkovic, we weren't afraid of anyone, and we attacked like wild men at home. Take, for example, the way we crushed Austria. Today, the players, and especially the coaches, are afraid of losing, and because of this fear, they don't win."

Israel hit a low point in 2003 when it played to a draw in an away match against a weak Malta squad. The outcome caught Israeli fans off guard, but senior soccer officials were hardly surprised. Coach Grant had warned his players the night before to be careful.

"If we lose, no one will remember we played in Malta – only the defeat and the fact we lost to a team that is weaker than us," he said. "I always tell my players it's better to be safe than sorry."

It seems Grant did a good job of inculcating the players with this defeatist approach, which according to the new Israeli formula, equates a tie with a win. A sign of this attitude could be read into the words of Israeli footballer Dedi Ben Dayan, who said after the game Saturday: "I guarantee a draw in Greece, as well," as if that were something to be proud of.

"When an Israeli player says a draw is enough and we shouldn't be greedy," says Yehuda Shenhar, an expert on the mentality of winning, "it shows something about our culture. People are trying to lower expectations so as not to disappoint, instead of building expectations and meeting them."

Omer Golan's equalizer in the 55th minute temporarily restored the confidence among Kashtan's squad that they could defeat their athletic rival. Yossi Benayoun, who expected the goal to give a big boost to the spectators, found himself gesturing with his hands at the scarf-waving crowd several times, encouraging it to keep cheering. After several minutes Benayoun realized that no matter how much they yelled in the stands, he just couldn't hear them.

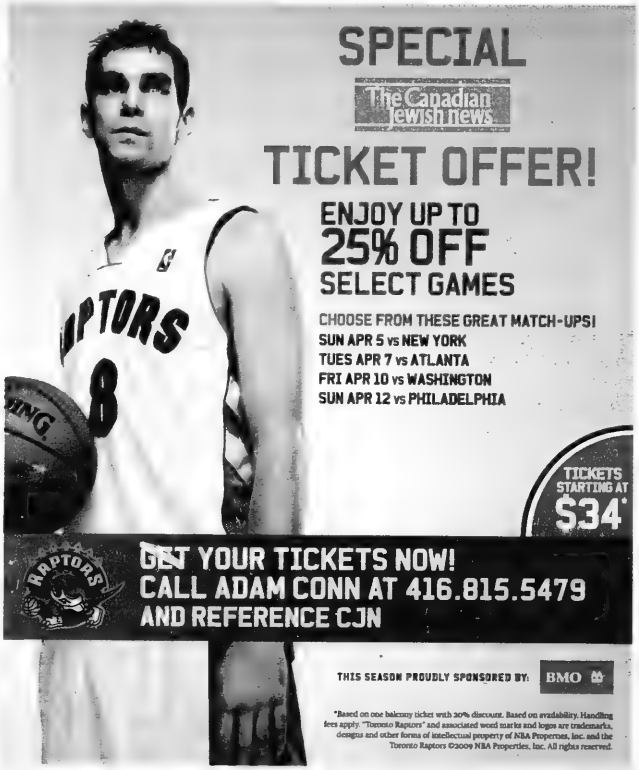
"The spectators don't create a 'home' atmosphere, and it's not because they don't want to," says one national team player. "It's a fact the tickets were sold out. The problem is the distance between the fans and the pitch. The feeling of matches in the league in stadiums like Teddy and Bloomfield is very different from Ramat Gan."

Fans say they would prefer to see the team play in venues where Israeli squads have done well against the European competition, such as the stadiums of Hapoel Tel Aviv and Maccabi Haifa. They note the last time Israel defeated Greece was in the Kiryat Eliezer stadium, 2-1 in the 1990s, when Alon Harazi scored the winning goal in extra time.

The Greeks – 2004 European Cup champions – certainly don't insist that all their national team games be played in their national stadium. Indeed, the teams will play their next game in a 26,000-seat stadium in Crete. If Greece is willing to do this and risk the ire of fans in Athens, would it not be worth it to move Israel's games to Bloomfield Stadium and increase the feeling of a home match?

"We have no problem moving the national team games to Bloomfield," says Nir Partzelina, the stadium's administrator. "It has just never come up for discussion."

It's time the subject came up for serious consideration.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Study links youth bodychecking with increased injuries

Compiled by CJN Staff

Bodychecking in youth hockey leagues in Canada, the United States and Finland is associated with an increased risk of injury to players, a study led by York University has found.

The study, a systematic review of published research from the three countries, appears in the March issue of the Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine. It found that bodychecking, a tactic designed to separate another player from the puck, was often cited as a leading cause of injuries across age levels and divisions of play in youth hockey leagues in all three countries.

The international review of research confirms the main finding of a York-led study from three years ago, namely, that bodychecking is hazardous to young hockey players, said Alison Macpherson, a professor in York's School of Kinesiology and Health Science.

"Nineteen of the 20 studies we looked at this time showed an increased risk of injuries when bodychecking was permitted, and some of these injuries were very serious," Macpherson said. "We reviewed nine studies from Canada, nine from the United States and two from Finland. And the findings from all but one support recommendations that children should play in non-contact hockey leagues until they are at least at the bantam level – 13 years of age."

Macpherson led the Canadian study published in 2006, working with co-author Andrew Howard, a staff orthopedic surgeon and director of the trauma program at the Hospital for Sick Children. They worked together again on the review of international research, along with Joel Warsh and Serban Constantin, both York students at the time of the study.

Some of the studies from Canada, the United States and Finland included leagues with players up to age 20, but the worst injuries were in young players.

"Fractures were the most common injuries, with most of the fractures occurring to those in checking leagues", said Howard. "Hockey is a high-energy sport and this creates a potential for fractures, which prevent return to play for a very long time or in rare cases are disabling. Equally important is the risk of concussion, with repeat or even single concussions causing loss of educational and workplace performance relative to one's peers."

Warsh, who has coached minor hockey, said children clearly love hockey, whether or not bodychecking is allowed. However, there is no need to put children into situations with an increased risk of injury and by removing bodychecking from the younger groups, the spike in injuries related to checking is likely to be reduced, he said.

Do we all have a little bully in us?

Sandie Benitah
20Something

When I was a little girl, I always felt like I had a sixth sense that let me actually feel another child's pain if they were being teased or if they were sent to the corner.

I was shy, quiet and obedient, but up until recently, I never thought for a minute that I could be considered a bully.

But now I realize that I kind of was one.

In childhood books, the bully was always drawn as a short pudgy boy with scraggly hair, missing teeth and narrow dark eyes. No wonder he never had any friends!

In high school, bullies were portrayed in movies as the coolest kids in school, the most popular people around. No wonder you didn't want to mess with them, either.

But I recently realized that I didn't have to be one of the "mean girls" to make someone feel bad.

Last week, I spent the afternoon with a beautiful young tween who is every friend's dream, because she's loyal, fun and brave. She's also every parent's biggest blessing, as she was mature enough to tell them about a young boy in class who was harassing her.

Her parents felt as if their hearts were breaking as they noticed the sadness in their daughter's eyes.

I tried to make them feel better by telling them what I know to be the truth: everyone experiences teasing in their lifetime, no matter how popular they are.

I told them stories of countless people I knew who were teased. There were the two Grade 5 girls who thought it would be fun to follow little-Grade-4-me around the playground repeating everything I said. There was the popular girl in class who the boys laughed at for having a big smile. There was the cutest boy in school who for a while was teased about possibly being gay.

But then I started remembering all the stupid pranks I participated in, such as ordering a pizza to someone else's house, or crank-calling a classmate I didn't like. My friends and I had a grand old time, and now I'm ashamed of it.

On the one hand, I can easily excuse myself for my childish antics, because I was just that – a child. But really, I have to ask myself what drove me – a shy, kind obedient kid – to ever be mean? Do we all have what it takes to be a bully?

Usually, when we think of a bully, we think of someone who is maladjusted or perhaps someone who was not shown love or taught empathy at home. But I think it's easy for any of us to be mean to each other when we forget to acknowledge each other as humans rather than just random people who make their way in and out of our lives.

And maybe that's the secret to dealing with bullies, too.

We will encounter bullies our entire life, not just at school, but at work or living in our neighbourhood. They are the people that make you learn the toughest life lesson – how to believe in yourself and how to look out for yourself.

But they are also there to remind us to be aware of our own actions and hurtful ways.

Can we deal with a bully without becoming a bully ourselves?

My special tween friend did.

Instead of making her bully look stupid in front of all his friends, she decided instead to speak with his parents in an effort to make him understand the consequences of his actions.

It's hard to try to look past someone's mean streak in an effort to find some kindness behind their tough exterior. But if we don't, we might just forget that we are all capable of being mean-spirited.

And a bully without self-consciousness is the scariest bully of all.

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1 Asian pear, peeled, cored, cut into small cubes
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1 tsp finely grated orange peel
3/4 tsp ground cinnamon
Chopped fresh mint

Stir walnuts in heavy small skillet over medium heat until lightly browned and fragrant, about 5 min. Cool and chop nuts; place in medium bowl. Add apple, pear, wine, 2 tablespoons honey, orange peel, and cinnamon. Stir to blend, adding more honey, if desired. Can be made 4 hrs ahead. Let stand at room temperature. Toss to blend and drain before continuing. Sprinkle charoset with mint; serve.

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About Life

Dear Ella,

This is the first year since Josh and I got married that I am making a seder in our home. Since my parents live out of town, I will have his parents, grandmother and brother over. I was really looking forward to this, as I have always been a guest at a seder and have never hosted my own.

My mother-in-law obviously has some trust issues with me. She doesn't believe I can handle this and is taking over. She has "suggested" the menu, she has told, not asked, me what she will bring. She insisted on buying my meat for me, because she knows how to pick the best cuts. I am feeling very overwhelmed and really wanted to take charge of this. The seder that I was so looking forward to has now become nothing but a burden and a source of stress for me. What can I do?

This is My Seder

Dear This is My Seder

It's time to turn the tables. Your mother-in-law, although well meaning, is used to being the balabuste, the head honcho, the matriarch. She has instinctively jumped in to help, as this is all she knows. This is a learning experience for her as well.

These are strange waters for both of you, so you need to tread lightly. Making a seder is a lot of work, and I am sure you can use a helping hand. However, the help you require is your decision. If you need help with cooking, shopping or the menu, that's your call to make, not hers.

You need to talk to her face to face, and if necessary, you should have your husband there as well. This is his mother, and he needs to be there as an emergency buffer for you.

I'm sure she doesn't have a clue that she has overstepped her boundaries. Tell her exactly what you wrote in this letter – that you have always been a guest at other seders and this is your first opportunity to make one in your own home. Tell her you would love her help, and assign duties to her – like "it would be a huge help if you could handle the chicken soup and matzah balls. I've got the brisket and chicken covered." This way she not only knows what her duties are, but that you have handled the other stuff as well.

I know you will have a wonderful seder together. Relax and enjoy. Chag Samayach.

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN, *email: eb@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.*

Try giving yourself a voice

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

I have begun blogging. I am a blogger.

For those of you who don't know what blogging is, Wikipedia explains that a blog is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse chronological order.

A blog is an interesting entity that shares commentary on news or any particular subject such as Torah scrolls in Jerusalem, cooking Jewish food in Thailand, or mini collies. Many blogs, such as my own, are personal diaries of thoughts and activities. A typical blog combines text, images and links to other blogs, Web pages and other media related to its topic.

The compelling thing about blogs is that they can be very interactive. By this I mean that readers are encouraged to read blog posts (articles, ideas, etc.) and comment on what they have read. In essence, a blog creates a thread of discussion, debate or storytelling on a given topic that can go on for pages. This is the talmudic aspect of blogging. (For more on this idea, read The Talmud and the Internet: A Journey Between Worlds, by Jonathan Rosen).

There are private, personal, corporate, thinking-media-type and genre blogs. As of December 2007, the blog search engine Technorati was tracking more than 112 million blogs.

Your blog can be updated on a daily, hourly or weekly basis. (Not surprisingly, according to the Huffington Post, which features a number of well-respected bloggers, of the more than 100 million blogs online, only 7.5 million have been updated in the last 90 days.)

My blog is called Avrum's Blog and can be found at http://avrum.net. It's a work in progress, but it's showing positive results, such as an average of 150 daily hits. I describe my blog as an online community where people can present wondrous ideas about slices of life, the spirit, being Jewish and activism.

I have written blog postings on topics such as Gilad Schalit: 1,000 days in Captivity; Jews: We Don't Stand up for Ourselves; A Call for a (Jewish) Community Mobilization Plan; Have you Ever Saved a Life?; Are Old People Sexy?, and On Being a Jewish Emissary.

In order to encourage a wider community of thought, I have invited guest writers to contribute, such as Rabbi Reuven Tradburks, spiritual leader of Toronto's Kehillat Shaarei Torah and president of the Vaad Haraboni of Toronto (the main body of local Orthodox rabbis).

I'm still discovering my blogging voice, but I'm already quite excited about having the opportunity to free associate through blogging and post ideas as they come to me. It's literally invigorating.

Give blogging a try. It's free. It will give you the chance to write (something many people want to do) and be heard, far and wide, about issues and ideas that interest you. Blogging gives you a voice as loud as anyone else's.

Blogging is quickly becoming the tool of choice for many writers and a must for anyone involved in business or social activism, or an individual or group committed to a concept, product, idea or approach to change. One blog I discovered is about kippot. Who would have known there are so many newfangled designs available?

If you want to read some blogs before diving in, type Bloglines, BlogScope, and Technorati into your search engines and discover a whole new world of writing possibilities.

Consider creating a blog for yourself. Write about the beauty of the Jewish people or about ways to fight anti-Semitism. Write about poetry, the thought that just came into your mind, immigration law, gardening or darning socks.

Blogging: it's a developing world that's bringing enormous change to media, thought and our way of life.

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Amy Stein, member of Leadership Sinai since 2005 & Samantha Roach, daughter

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